The Arrow Maker

MARY AUSTIN

Margaret Carnegie
Library

Accession No. 13439

Class 812 Book A937z

Presented by

[redacted]

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/bwb_P9-BJS-750

THE ARROW MAKER

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

RUDOLF BESIER

DON: *A Comedy*, $1.00 NET

J. B. FAGAN

THE EARTH: *A Comedy*, $1.00 NET

13439

Edith Wynne Matthison as the Chisera

13457

THE ARROW MAKER

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

BY

MARY AUSTIN

AUTHOR OF "THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN,"
"LOST BORDERS," ETC.

Mills College Libra
Withdrawn

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
1911

Copyright, 1911
By Duffield and Company

THE • PLIMPTON • PRESS
[W • D • O]
NORWOOD • MASS • U • S • A

812
L937a

Dedicated

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO

H. C. H.

AS ONE WHO AMONG MANY PROTESTANTS
MADE GOOD

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

In the Order of their Appearance

Choco	*Fighting Men.*
Winnedumah	
Pamaquash	
Tavwots	
Yavi	*A Youth.*
Seegooche	*The Chief's Wife.*
Tiawa	*A Very Old Woman.*
Wacoba	*Wife to Pamaquash.*
The Chisera.	*Medicine Woman of the Paiutes.*
Bright Water.	*The Chief's Daughter.*
Tuiyo	*Friends of Bright Water.*
White Flower	
Pioke	
Simwa	*The Arrow Maker.*
Padahoon	*Rival to Simwa for Leadership.*
Rain Wind	*Chief of the Paiutes.*
Haiwai	*A Young Matron.*

ORIGINAL CAST

THE NEW THEATRE

"THE ARROW MAKER"

A PLAY OF AMERICAN INDIAN LIFE

By Mary Austin

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action takes place in the foothills of the Sierras, California. Time — Prior to the white occupation of California.

ACT I. THE CHISERA'S WICKIUP. VALLEY OF SAGHARAWITE

Note — *Between Acts I and II the orchestra will play an entr'acte, "The Arrow Maker," based on Indian themes. Composed by* Mr. Elliott Schenck.

ACT II. THE CAMP OF SAGHARAWITE. THREE MONTHS LATER

Intermission — Fifteen Minutes

ACT III. THE TOP OF TOORAPE. ONE YEAR LATER

CHARACTERS

IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE

CHOCO	*tribesmen of Sagharawite*	MR. STEWART BAIRD
WINNEDUMAH		MR. JOHN SUTHERLAND
PAMAQUASH		MR. REGINALD BARLOW
YAVI		MR. ALBERT EASDALE
FLEETFOOT		MR. EDWIN CUSHMAN
TAVWOTS		MR. PEDRO DE CORDOBA
SEEGOOCHE, *wife of the chief*		MISS ETHEL BRANDON
TIAWA, *an old woman*		MISS HELEN REIMER
WACOBA, *a matron*		MISS OLIVE OLIVER
THE CHISERA, *"Friend of the Gods"*		MISS EDITH WYNNE MATTHISON
BRIGHT WATER, *daughter of the chief*		MISS LEAH BATEMAN-HUNTER
WHITE FLOWER	*companions of Bright Water*	MISS ELSIE HERNDON KEARNS
TUIYO		MISS LEWISE SEYMOUR
SEYAVI		MISS BARBARA KING
SIMWA, *the arrow maker*		MR. FRANK GILLMORE
PADAHOON, *a fighting man*		MR. BEN JOHNSON
RAIN WIND, *chief of the tribe*		MR. E. M. HOLLAND
HAIWAI, *a matron*		MISS MARY DOYLE

FIGHTING MEN, OLD MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE SAGHARAWITES — A SMALL TRIBE OF THE PAIUTE INDIANS

INCIDENTAL MUSIC AND DANCES, BASED ON INDIAN THEMES, COMPOSED BY MR. ELLIOTT SCHENCK.

SONGS AND CHANTS IN THE PLAY TAKEN FROM PHONOGRAPHIC RECORDS OF INDIAN MUSIC.

DANCES TAUGHT BY CHIEF RED EAGLE.

COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES DESIGNED FROM EXAMPLES IN THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

SCENERY PAINTED BY MESSRS. UNITT & WICKES.

"THE ARROW MAKER" HAS BEEN STAGED BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE NEW THEATRE STAFF:

Mr. George Foster Platt
PRODUCER

Mr. Frederick Stanhope
ASSISTANT PRODUCER

Mr. Elliott Schenck
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Mr. E. Hamilton Bell
ART DIRECTOR

Mr. Wilfrid North
STAGE MANAGER

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The greatest difficulty to be met with in the writing of an Indian play is the extensive misinformation about Indians. Any real aboriginal of my acquaintance resembles his prototype in the public mind about as much as he does the high-nosed, wooden sign of a tobacco store, the fact being that among the fifty-eight linguistic groups of American aboriginals, customs, traits and beliefs differ as greatly as among Slavs and Sicilians. Their very speech appears not to be derived from any common stock. All that they really have of likeness is an average condition of primitiveness; they have travelled just so far toward an understanding of the world they live in, and no farther. It is this general limitation of knowledge which makes, in spite of the multiplication of tribal customs, a common attitude of mind which alone affords a basis of interpretation.

But before attempting to realize the working of Indian psychology, you must first rid yourself of the notion that there is any real difference between the tribes of men except the explanations. What determines man's behaviour in the presence of fever, thunder and the separations of death, is the nature of his guess at the causes of these things. The issues of life do not vary so much with the conditions of civilization as is popularly supposed.

Chiefest among the misconceptions of primitive

life which make difficult any dramatic presentation of it, is the notion that all its human contacts are accompanied by a degree of emotional stress that obtains only in the most complex social organizations. We are always hearing, from the people farthest removed from it, of "great primitive passions," when in fact what distinguishes the passion of the tribesmen from our own, is their greater liability to the pacific influences of Nature and their greater freedom from the stimulus of the imagination. What among us makes for the immensity of emotion, is the great weight of accumulated emotional tradition stored up in literature and art, almost entirely wanting in the camps of the aboriginals. There the two greatest themes of modern drama, love and ambition, are modified, the one by the more or less communal nature of tribal labour, the other by the plain fact that in the simple, open-air life of the Indian the physical stress of sex is actually much less than in conditions called civilized.

When the critics are heard talking of "drama of great primitive passions," what they mean is great barbaric passions, passions far enough along in the process of socialization to be subject to the interactions of wealth, caste and established religion, but still free of the obligation of politeness. But the life of the American Indian provides no such conditions, and, moreover, in the factor which makes conspicuously for the degree of complication called Plot, is notably wanting, — I mean in the factor of Privacy. Where all the functions of living are car-

ried on in the presence of the community, or at best behind the thin-walled, leafy huts, human relations become simplified to a degree difficult for our complexer habit to comprehend. The only really great passions, great I mean in the sense of being dramatically possible, are communal and find their expression in the dance which is the normal vehicle of emotional stress.

In "The Arrow Maker" the author, without dwelling too much on tribal peculiarities, has attempted the explication of this primitive attitude toward a human type common to all conditions of society. The particular mould in which the story is cast takes shape from the manner of aboriginal life in the Southwest, anywhere between the Klamath River and the Painted Desert; but it has been written in vain if the situation has not also worked itself out in terms of your own environment.

The *Chisera* is simply the Genius, one of those singular and powerful characters whom we are still, with all our learning, unable to account for without falling back on the primitive conception of gift as arising from direct communication with the gods. That she becomes a Medicine Woman is due to the circumstance of being born into a time which fails to discriminate very clearly as to just which of the inexplicable things lie within the control of her particular gift. That she accepts the interpretation of her preëminence which common opinion provides for her, does not alter the fact that she is no more or less than just the gifted woman, too much occu-

pied with the use of her gift to look well after herself, and more or less at the mercy of the tribe. What chiefly influences their attitude toward her is worthy of note, being no less than the universal, unreasoned conviction that great gift belongs, not to the possessor of it, but to society at large. The whole question then becomes one of how the tribe shall work the *Chisera* to their best advantage.

How they did this, with what damage and successes, is to be read, but if to be read profitably, with its application in mind to the present social awakening to the waste, the enormous and stupid waste of the gifts of women. To one fresh from the consideration of the roots of life as they lie close to the surface of primitive society, this obsession of the recent centuries that the community can only be served by a gift for architecture, for administration, for healing, when it occurs in the person of a male, is only a trifle less ridiculous than that other stupidity that a gift for mothering must not be exercised except in the event of a particular man who, under certain restrictions, is able to afford the opportunity. There is perhaps no social movement going on in this present, so deep-rooted and dramatic as this struggle of Femininity to recapture its right to serve, and still to serve with whatever powers and possessions it finds itself endowed. But a dramatic presentation of it is hardly possible outside of primitive conditions where no tradition intervenes to prevent society from accepting the logic of events.

Whatever more there may be in "The Arrow Maker" besides its Indian colour, should lie in the discovery made by the *Chisera*, to which the author subscribes, that it is also in conjunction with her normal relation for loving and bearing that the possessor of gift finds the greatest increment of power. To such of these as have not discovered it for themselves, "The Arrow Maker" is hopefully recommended.

ACT FIRST

THE ARROW MAKER

ACT FIRST

SCENE. — *The hut of the* CHISERA, *in the foothills of the Sierras. It stands at the mouth of a steep, dark cañon, opening toward the valley of Sagharawite. At the back rise high and barren cliffs where eagles nest; at the foot of the cliffs runs a stream, hidden by willow and buckthorn and toyon. The wickiup is built in the usual Paiute fashion, of long willows set about a circular pit, bent over to form a dome, thatched with reeds and grass. About the hut lie baskets and blankets, a stone metate, other household articles, all of the best quality; in front is a clear space overflowing with knee-deep many-coloured bloom of the California spring. A little bank that runs from the wickiup to the toyon bushes is covered with white forget-me-nots. The hearth fire between two stones is quite out, but the deer-skin that screens the opening of the hut is caught up at one side, a sign that the owner is not far from home, or expects to return soon.*

At first glance the scene appears devoid of life, but suddenly the call of a jay bird is heard faintly and far up the trail that leads to the right among the rocks. It is repeated nearer at hand, perfectly imitated

but with a nuance that advises of human origin, and two or three half-naked Indians are seen to be making their way toward the bottom of the cañon, their movements so cunningly harmonized with the lines of the landscape as to render them nearly invisible. CHOCO, PAMAQUASH *and* WINNEDUMAH *with two others come together at the end of the bank farthest from the* CHISERA'S *hut.*

CHOCO

Who called?

WINNEDUMAH

It came from farther up.

PAMAQUASH

Yavi, I think. He must have seen something.

CHOCO

By the Bear, if the Castacs have crossed our boundaries, there are some of them shall not recross it!

WINNEDUMAH

Hush — the Chisera — she will hear you!

CHOCO

She is not in the hut. She went out toward the hills early this morning and has not yet returned. Besides, if the Castacs have crossed, we cannot keep it from the women much longer.

PAMAQUASH

[*Who has moved up to a better post of observation.*] There is some one on the trail.

[*The jay's call is heard and answered softly by* PAMAQUASH.]

CHOCO

Yavi. But Tavwots is not with him. [YAVI *comes dropping from the cliffs.*] What have you seen?

YAVI

Smoke rising — by Deer Leap. Two long puffs and a short one.

[*The news is received with sharp excited murmurs.*]

PAMAQUASH

More than a score — and with all our youths we cannot count so many.

CHOCO

And this business of the war leader still unsettled — The Council must sit at once. Go, one of you, and tell Chief Rain Wind that Tavwots has signalled from Deer Leap that more than a score of Castacs are out against us.

WINNEDUMAH

And tell the women to prepare a gift hastily for the Chisera. Who knows how soon we shall have need of her strong medicine.

[*One of the Indians departs on this errand.*]

CHOCO

Never so much need of it as when we have neglected our own part of the affair! Even before the Castacs began to fill up our springs and drive our

deer we knew that the Chief is too old for war; and now that the enemy has crossed our borders we are still leaderless.

WINNEDUMAH

So we should not be if we had followed the tribal use and given the leadership to years and experience. It is you, young men, and the to-do you have made about the Arrow Maker that have unsettled judgment.

CHOCO

I have nothing against years and experience, but when one has the gods as plainly on his side as Simwa ——

YAVI

Never have I seen a man so increase in power and fortune —

WINNEDUMAH

Huh — huh! I too have watched the growth of this Simwa. Also I have seen a gourd swelling with the rains, and I have not laid it to the gods in either case. But the Council must sit upon it. We must bring it to Council.

YAVI

[*Hotly.*] Why should you credit the gods with Simwa's good fortune since he himself does not so claim it? For my part, I think with the Arrow Maker that it is better for a man to thrive by what is within him, rather than by the making of medicine or the wisdom of the elders.

PAMAQUASH

[*From above.*] Tst — st, Tavwots!

[TAVWOTS *comes down the cañon panting with speed. He drops exhausted on the bank, and one of the men gives him water between his palms from the creek.*]

CHOCO

Have they crossed?

TAVWOTS

Between Deer Leap and Standing Rock — more than a score, though I think some of them were boys — but they had no women.

[*The news is received with consternation.*]

CHOCO

They mean fighting then!

WINNEDUMAH

Well, they can have it.

TAVWOTS

But they should not be let fatten on our deer before they come to it. Winnemucca, whom I left at Deer Leap, will bring us word where they camp tonight. In the meantime there is much to do. [*Rising.*]

CHOCO

Much. No doubt Simwa will have something to suggest.

TAVWOTS

The Arrow Maker is not yet war leader, my

friend. I go to the Chief and the Council. [*He goes.*]

CHOCO

And yet, I think the Chief favours Simwa, else why should he prefer to put the election to lot rather than keep to the custom of the fathers?

PAMAQUASH

There might be reasons to that, not touching the merits of the Arrow Maker. But, by the Bear, his luck is enough to dazzle the eyes of one less blind than Chief Rain Wind. [*Sounds of the grief of women in the direction of the camp.*] Tavwots has met the women!

CHOCO

They are coming to the Chisera. We should not have let them find us here; they will neglect her to beset us with questions.

[*To them enter three women of the campody of Sagharawite, carrying perfect-patterned, bowl-shaped baskets, with gifts of food for the* CHISERA. SEEGOOCHE, *the Chief's wife, is old and full of dignity.* TIAWA *is old and sharp, but* WACOBA *is a comfortable, comely matron, who wears a blanket modestly yet to conceal charms not past their prime.* SEEGOOCHE *and* TIAWA *wear basket caps, but* WACOBA *has a bandeau of bright beads about her hair. They show signs of agitation, instantly subdued at sight of the men.*]

SEEGOOCHE

Is this true that Tavwots has told us that the Castacs are upon us?

CHOCO

No nearer than Pahrump. Not so near by the time we have done with them. What gifts have you?

TIAWA

The best the camp affords. Think you we would stint when the smoke of the Castacs goes up within our borders?

WACOBA

Where is she?

CHOCO

Abroad in the hills gathering roots and herbs for tonight's medicine. Wait for her — we must go look to our fighting gear.

PAMAQUASH

[*To* WACOBA.] My bow case, is it finished?

WACOBA

And the bow inside it. See that you come not back to me nor to your young son until the bow string is frayed asunder.

CHOCO

If you do your work with the Chisera as well as we with Castac, you shall not need to question our bow-strings.

[*The men go out toward the camp.*]

SEEGOOCHE

Leave us to deal — though if she cannot help us in this matter, I do not know where we shall turn.

TIAWA

Never have I asked help of her, and been disappointed.

WACOBA

Aye, but that was mere women's matters, weevil in the pine nuts, a love-charm or a colicky child. *This is war!*

SEEGOOCHE

[*Still peering about.*] As if that were not a woman's affair also!

TIAWA

You may well say that! It was in our last quarrel with Castac I lost the only man-child I ever had, dead before he was born. When the women showed me his face, it was all puckered with the bitterness of that defeat. You may well say a woman's matter!

SEEGOOCHE

That was the year my husband was first made chief, and we covered defeat with victory, as we shall again. It was Tinnemaha, the father of the Chisera, went before the gods for us, I remember.

TIAWA

Well for us that he taught her his strong medicine. Not a fighting man from Tecuya to Tehachappi but trusts in her.

[*Goes to the creek and dips up water to drink in her basket cap.*]

WACOBA

[*Tentatively.*] It is believed by some that she makes medicine for Simwa, the Arrow Maker, and

that is why his arrows are so well feathered and fly so swiftly to the mark.

SEEGOOCHE

Simwa! Why, he scoffs at charms and speaks lightly even of the gods.

TIAWA

[*Giving the others to drink from her cap.*] Aye, Simwa puts not faith in anybody but Simwa.

SEEGOOCHE

And with good reason, for he is the most skilful of the tribesmen. He has made all the arrows for the fighting men. Do you think they will make him war leader?

WACOBA

[*Ornamenting the basket she has brought with a wreath of flowers, which she plucks.*] Padahoon will never agree to it.

TIAWA

But if Simwa is the better man?

WACOBA

The Great Hawk is older, and has the greater experience.

SEEGOOCHE

Prutt! If age and experience were all, my husband would not ask that a new leader be chosen. Young men are keenest-eyed and quickest afoot.

TIAWA

[*Going over to* WACOBA, *aside from* SEEGOOCHE.] So the Chief favours Simwa? I would not have thought it.

WACOBA

[*Significantly.*] Seegooche's daughter is not married, and the Arrow Maker has many blankets.

TIAWA

Ugh, huh! So the scent lies up that trail? Well, why not?

WACOBA

Why not? The Chief's daughter and the war leader? A good match.

TIAWA

[*Going across to the hut.*] Aye, a good match! . . . Do you know, I have never been in the Chisera's house. It is said she has great store of baskets and many beads. Let us look.

SEEGOOCHE

No, no; do not go near it.

WACOBA

[*Alarmed.*] Kima! Tiawa, she may be watching you.

TIAWA

[*By the hut, but not daring to enter it.*] What harm to visit a neighbour's house when the door is open? Besides, she makes no bad medicine.

SEEGOOCHE

We know that she does not, but not that she could not if she would.

TIAWA

[*Returning reluctantly.*] Why should we hold the Chisera so apart from the campody? Why should she not have a husband and children as other women? How can she go before the gods for us until she knows what we are thinking in our hearts?

WACOBA

[*Jumping up.*] I have seen something stirring in the alder bushes. I think the Chisera comes!

SEEGOOCHE

Do not be seen too near the hut. Come away, Tiawa.

TIAWA

Have you the presents ready? [*The women take up their baskets hastily.*] Hide your basket, Seegooche. It is not well to let all your gifts appear on the first showing, for if she is not persuaded at first, we shall have something of more worth.

[The CHISERA *comes out of the trail by the almond bushes, young and tall and comely, but of dignified, almost forbidding carriage. She is dressed chiefly in skins; her hair is very long, braided with beads. She carries a small burden-basket on her back, supported by a band about her forehead. She removes this, and drops it at the hut, coming forward.*]

THE CHISERA

Friends, what have we to do with each other? Seegooche, has your meal fermented? Or has your baby the colic again, Wacoba?

SEEGOOCHE

We have a gift for you, Chisera.

[*The women draw near timidly, each, as she speaks, picking up her basket and placing it at the* CHISERA'S *feet, and retire.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Looking at the gifts, without touching them.*] The venison is fat and tender; Seegooche, there is no one grinds meal so smoothly as you. The honey is indeed acceptable.

[*After a pause, during which the medicine woman looks keenly at them.*]

TIAWA

We do not come for ourselves, Chisera, but from the tribeswomen.

SEEGOOCHE

From every one who has a husband or a son able to join battle.

THE CHISERA

[*Eagerly.*] Is there battle?

SEEGOOCHE

Even as we came, there was word that the Castacs are camped at Pahrump, and before night our men must meet them.

THE CHISERA

And you ask of me —— ?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Approaching appealingly and sinking to the ground in the stress of anxiety.*] A charm, Chisera!

TIAWA

[*Approaching with* WACOBA.] A most potent medicine, O friend of the gods!

WACOBA

That our men may have strength and discretion. That their hearts may not turn to water and their knees quake under them —

TIAWA

[*Urgently.*] May the bows of Castac be broken, and their arrows turned aside —

SEEGOOCHE

For the lords of our bodies and the sons of our bodies, a blessing, Chisera!

WACOBA

That our hearths may be kept alight and our children know their fathers —

TIAWA

When the noise of the battle is joined and the buzzards come, may they feed on our foes, Chisera —

SEEGOOCHE

O friend of the gods, befriend us!

[*The women cast dust on their hair and rock to and fro while the* CHISERA *speaks, casting up their arms in an agony of entreating.*]

THE CHISERA

Am I not also a tribeswoman? Would not I do this much for my people? But your gifts and your prayers will be acceptable to the gods, for myself I can do nothing. Who is this that comes?

[*The young girls steal up noiselessly through the bushes, led by the Chief's daughter.* BRIGHT WATER *is lovely and young; her hair, flowing loosely over her shoulders and breast, is mingled with strings of beads and bright berries. Her dress of fringed buckskin is heavily beaded, her arms are weighted with armlets of silver and carved beads of turquoise; about her neck hangs a disc of glittering shell. She walks proudly, a little in advance of the others, who bunch up timidly like quail on the trail behind her. The women, catching sight of the girls, spring up, frightened, and stand half protectingly between them and the* CHISERA.]

TIAWA

It is the Chief's daughter.

SEEGOOCHE

What do you here? You have neither sons nor husbands that you should ask spells and charms.

BRIGHT WATER

How, then, shall we have husbands or sons, if the battle goes against us?

THE CHISERA

Well answered, Chief's daughter.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Surprised.*] You know me?

THE CHISERA

I have heard that the loveliest maiden of Sagharawite is called Bright Water, daughter of Rain Wind, Chief of the Paiutes.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Going over to* BRIGHT WATER.] You should have stayed in the wickiup, my daughter; you are too young to go seeking magic medicine.

BRIGHT WATER

The more need because we are young, mother. If the loss of battle comes to you, at least you have had the love of a man and the lips of children at the breast. But we, if the battle goes against us, what have we?

THE CHISERA

Ay, truly, Seegooche, there are no joys so hard to do without as those we have not had.

BRIGHT WATER

Therefore, we ask a charm, Chisera, for our sweethearts; and, in the meantime, may this remind you —— [*She drops bracelet in the* CHISERA'S *basket.*]

WHITE FLOWER

[*Going forward.*] The scarlet beads for me, Chisera. I am to be married in the time of tasselling corn.

TUIYO

The shells from me, Chisera; good medicine!

SEYAVI

Strong Bow is my lover, Chisera. Bring him safe home again.

[*The girls retire after dropping their gifts in the* CHISERA'S *basket.*]

THE CHISERA

[*A little stiffly.*] You have no need of gifts. Am I not young, even as you are? Should *you* pray for your lover any more or less for the sake of a few beads?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Anxiously.*] Be not angry, Chisera. They would repay you for the dancing and singing.

[*The* CHISERA *gathers up the gifts that the older women have brought and goes into the hut. The girls take up their gifts, puzzled.*]

SEEGOOCHE

I am afraid you have vexed her with your foolish quest.

BRIGHT WATER

Has the Chisera a lover also that she speaks so?

SEEGOOCHE

It is not possible and we not know of it, for since her father's death if any sought her hand in marriage, he must come to my husband in the matter of dowry.

WACOBA

No fear that any will come while she is still the Chisera.

BRIGHT WATER

She is the wisest of us all.

TIAWA

Wisdom is good as a guest, but it wears out its welcome when it sits by the hearthstone.

BRIGHT WATER

She has great power with the gods.

WACOBA

So much so that if she had a husband, he dare not beat her lest she run and tattle to them.

SEEGOOCHE

She is our Chisera, and there is not another like her between Tehachappi and Tecuya. If she were wearied with stooping and sweating, if she were anxious with bearing and rearing, how could she go before the gods for us?

TIAWA

Ay, that is the talk in the wickiups, that we must hold her apart from us to give her room for her great offices, but I have always said — but I am old and

nobody minds me — I have always said that if she had loved as we love and had borne as we have borne, she would be the more fitted to entreat the gods that we may not lose.

SEEGOOCHE

[*As the* CHISERA *comes out of the hut.*] If you are angry, Chisera, turn it against our enemies of Castac.

THE CHISERA

You know that I cannot curse.

TIAWA

Is it true, Chisera, that you make no bad medicine?

THE CHISERA

Many kinds of sickness I can cure, and give easy childbirth. I can bring rain, and give fortune in the hunt, but of the making of evil spells I know nothing.

SEEGOOCHE

But your father, the medicine man — he was the dread and wonder of the tribes.

THE CHISERA

Ay, my father could kill by a spell, and make a wasting sickness with a frown, but he thought such powers not proper to women: therefore he taught me none.

WACOBA

But you will bring a blessing on the battle? Oh, Chisera, they do not tell us women, but we hear it

whispered about the camp that the men of Castac are five-and-twenty, and even with the youths who go to their first battle we cannot make a score of ours. It is the Friend of the Soul of Man must make good our numbers.

THE CHISERA

Even now I go about to prepare strong medicine.

WACOBA

Come away, then, and leave the Chisera to her work. [*Going.*]

SEEGOOCHE

May the gods befriend you. If we have your blessing, we care little for another's curse. [*Going.*]

THE CHISERA

Stay. After all, we are but women together, and if a woman may give counsel, women may hear it.

TIAWA

Would we might hear yours today!

THE CHISERA

When the smoke of the medicine fire arises, so as to be seen from the spring, do you come up along the creek as far as the black rock.

WOMEN

Yes, yes!

THE CHISERA

When you hear the medicine rattles, stand off by the toyon.

WOMEN

By the toyon — yes!

THE CHISERA

But when the rattles are stopped, and the singing falls off, come up very softly, not to disturb council, and hear what the gods have said. If the men speak against it, I will stand for you.

SEEGOOCHE

Our thanks to you, Chisera, for this kindness.

TIAWA

And though you are a Chisera, and have strange intercourse with gods, I know you a woman, by this token.

THE CHISERA

Doubt it not, but go.

SEEGOOCHE

Come away, girls.

[*They go out, the girls with them. But* BRIGHT WATER *lingers, and comes back to the* CHISERA.]

BRIGHT WATER

Chisera ——

THE CHISERA

Chief's daughter?

BRIGHT WATER

Call me by my name.

THE CHISERA

Bright Water, what would you have of me?

BRIGHT WATER

Can you — will you make a charm for one going out to battle whose name is not to be spoken?

THE CHISERA

How shall the gods find him out, if he is not to be named?

BRIGHT WATER

[*Earnestly.*] Oh, he is handsome and strong in the shoulders; the muscles of his back are laced like thongs. He is the bravest ——

THE CHISERA

[*Laughing.*] Chief's daughter, whenever I have made love-charms, they have been for men handsome and strong in the back.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Abashed.*] I know not how else to describe him.

THE CHISERA

[*Still smiling.*] And his name is not to be spoken? [BRIGHT WATER *continues to look down at her moccasin.*] If I had something of his; something he had shaped with his hands or worn upon his person, that I could make a medicine upon —

BRIGHT WATER

Like this?

[*Takes amulet from her neck and holds it out.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Taking it.*] Did he give you this?

BRIGHT WATER

He made it.

THE CHISERA

[*Examining it.*] It is skilfully fashioned.

BRIGHT WATER

Will it answer?

THE CHISERA

To make a spell upon? Yes, if you can spare it.

BRIGHT WATER

Shall I have it again?

THE CHISERA

When the time is past for which the spell is made.

BRIGHT WATER

Make it, then; a powerful medicine against ill fortune in battle. And this for your pains, Chisera. [*Holds out bracelet.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Proudly.*] I want no gifts. Keep your bracelet.

BRIGHT WATER

[*With equal pride.*] The Chief's daughter asks no favours.

THE CHISERA

But if a Chisera choose to confer them? [*With sudden feeling.*] What question is there between

us of Chief's daughter and Chisera? We are two women, and young.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Uncertainly.*] The Chisera is the friend of the gods.

THE CHISERA

And therefore not the friend of any tribeswoman? [*Passionately.*] Oh, I am weary of the friendship of the gods! If I have walked in the midnight and heard what the great ones have said, is that any reason I should not know what a man says to a maid in the dusk — or do a kindness to my own kind — or love, and be beloved?

BRIGHT WATER

[*Moved.*] Therefore take it, [*Offering bracelet again.*] as one woman from another — and you shall make the charm for me for love.

THE CHISERA

[*Taking the gift.*] I shall make it as though I loved him myself.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Startled.*] Oh, I did not say I loved him.

THE CHISERA

[*Smiling.*] No?

BRIGHT WATER

[*Studying the pattern of her moccasin.*] Is it true, Chisera, that you have been called to the council

that decides upon the war leader who is to be chosen in my father's place?

THE CHISERA

I am to inquire of the gods concerning it.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Diffidently.*] Chisera, I have heard — my father thinks — Simwa, the Arrow Maker, is well spoken of.

[*The first note of the love call is heard far up the cliffs. The* CHISERA *starts and controls herself.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Coldly, in dismissal, and rising.*] Simwa needs the good word of no man. It shall be as the gods determine.

[*Goes over to hut. The love call sounds nearer.*]

BRIGHT WATER

[*After a moment's hesitation.*] Farewell, Chisera. [*She goes.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Looking up the trail.*] Ah, Simwa, Simwa, what bond there is between us, when if I but pronounce thy name in my heart, thy voice answers. [*The love call is repeated far up the cliffs above her hut, and she answers it, singing:*]

Over-long are thy feet on the trails,
O Much Desired!
Dost thou not hear afar what my blood whispers,
Betraying my heart as the whir
Of the night-moth's wings betrays the lilies?

[*As she sings,* SIMWA, *in full war dress, comes dropping down, hand over hand, from the rocks, until he stands beside her.*]

SIMWA

Did you not hear me when first I called?

THE CHISERA

I heard you, Most Desired. When do I not? Even when I sleep, my heart wakes to hear you. The women have been with me.

SIMWA

You know then?

THE CHISERA

That this very night a war party of ours must go out to meet the Castacs.

SIMWA

And before that there will be a council to choose a war leader? Has the Chief told you?

THE CHISERA

Not since this latest word, but yesterday he bid me prepare a strong medicine, for he thought the election would be made by lot. But I did not tell him, O Much Desired, that I had already made medicine before the gods a night and a day to let the choice fall on you. A day and a night by Deer Leap on Toorape, where never foot but mine had been, I made medicine, and the answer is sure.

SIMWA

That I shall get the leadership.

THE CHISERA

When have the gods denied me anything that I asked for your sake, Arrow Maker of Sagharawite?

SIMWA

Then Pahawitz hunts on a cold trail, and there is nothing for me to do?

[*He sits on the bank and the* CHISERA *sits below him.*]

THE CHISERA

Beloved, there is much to do, for before the shadow which lies between my feet has grown tall again, I must make medicine for the sake of this war; and I have spent so much on you, the power goes from me. Now, you must put your hand upon my heart, and nurse it warm, so that the people lack nothing of their Chisera.

SIMWA

Is that good, Chisera?

[*Puts his arm about her.*]

THE CHISERA

Very good, Friend of my heart.

[*She leans upon his arm.*]

SIMWA

[*Quickened by the caress.*] Chisera, what did you do before I came?

THE CHISERA

Oh, then I lived in the dream of you, though I did not know very well what it was that pricked me

through the days. When I ran in the trails, my heart expected you at every turn, and in the dark of the hut the sense of you brooded on my sleep. But I thought it was all for the gods.

SIMWA

[*Fatuously.*] Until I came.

THE CHISERA

Did I tell you, Simwa, that day when first you found me dancing in the sun — you had been gathering eagles' feathers for your arrows, do you remember? — and came dropping from the rocks as you did just now — I thought that day that you were of the gods yourself, for I was sick with longing, and the spring was in my blood.

SIMWA

And when I came again, what did you think?

THE CHISERA

That you were the man most deserving their favour, and that all the medicine I had learned until then was merely that I might persuade them for your sake.

SIMWA

[*Sitting up.*] Chisera, when you go up to the Friend of the Soul of Man, you cannot be always asking for the tribespeople. Do you not sometimes ask for yourself?

THE CHISERA

What should I ask for when I have your love?

SIMWA

For friends, perhaps, who are to be rewarded, or those who have done you injuries? [*Watching her.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Laughing.*] Once, Simwa, I made a strong medicine all for myself. In the beginning, before I was sure of you, I made a singing medicine to draw you from the camp. And you came, Arrow Maker of Sagharawite, you came. [*Laying her hands on his bosom.*] Did you not feel me draw you?

SIMWA

Often and often, as it were a tie-rope in my bosom between us. [*Letting go her hands and stretching himself preparatory to rising.*] But I did not think it was your medicine.

THE CHISERA

What then?

SIMWA

[*Rising and walking about.*] Your beauty and the wonder of your dancing.

THE CHISERA

Tell me, Simwa, in the beginning I know you did not believe, but now you understand the power I have from the Friend of the Soul of Man?

SIMWA

Surely, now that I am about to be made war leader by means of it.

THE CHISERA

[*Rising and going back to feathering the prayer-stick.*] But I have heard the women gossiping at the spring ——

SIMWA

What did they say?

THE CHISERA

That Simwa does not believe in charms and scoffs at the gods.

SIMWA

That was true — [*Recovering.*] once. But now that I am become the most notable arrow maker in Sagharawite ——

THE CHISERA

Now, now you do not scoff at the Chisera?

SIMWA

[*Embarrassed.*] But it is not always well for a man to say what he thinks. If I were to tell in the campody whence my good fortune is, would not Padahoon do me some discredit for it?

THE CHISERA

But, Simwa, am I never to come to you as other women to the wickiups of their husbands?

SIMWA

What need, Chisera, when I come so often to yours?

THE CHISERA

The need of women to serve openly where they love.

SIMWA

But what service could you do me when you had lost the respect of the tribesmen? You know the tribal custom. It is not for the Friend of the Gods to dig roots and dress venison.

THE CHISERA

I have not found the gods any the less friendly since I have loved, Arrow Maker; and I know not why it should seem strange to the others that I should know love as — as we have known it. Only today the girls of the village came to me to buy a charm to keep their lovers safe in war. There was not one but dared to ask, even though she would not speak her lover's name for bashfulness. See, one of them gave me this to make medicine upon.

SIMWA

[*Taking it.*] Bright Water gave you this?

THE CHISERA

[*Surprised.*] How did you know?

SIMWA

I thought you said — that is, I have seen her wear it. Did she tell you from whom she had it?

THE CHISERA

Not by his name, but by the way he looked to her.

SIMWA

How was that?

THE CHISERA

As every lover looks to every maid — tall and strong and straight in the back. Even as you look to me, Beloved.

SIMWA

[*Relieved, giving back the amulet.*] May your medicine preserve him. And, as for me, Chisera, I wish I could persuade the tribesmen to look as favourably on me as you do.

THE CHISERA

But you have no enemies.

SIMWA

The Sparrow-Hawk, without doubt. Could you give me a curse for him?

THE CHISERA

[*Rising.*] Ah, you should not have asked me that. Never since my father died have I thought to regret that he did not teach me the making of evil medicine. Would I had all the curses in the world! [*Turning piteously to him.*] But you do not love me any the less because I have not one little, little curse to give you?

SIMWA

No, it is nothing. No curse can reach me past your blessing. But I would not have thought the old man would leave you wholly unprotected. Why, even I could wrong you, and, without a curse [*Trying to speak lightly.*] you could not pay me for it.

THE CHISERA

If no one does me more wrong than you, Simwa, I need no cursing. But, in truth, my father did give me — Ah, now I have thought of another gift for you, Arrow Maker of Sagharawite! Before he died, the medicine man, my father — did I not tell you? [*She rummages eagerly in her medicine bag.*] — gave me this magic arrow against my evil hour. [*Drawing it out.*] See how heavy it is, and how the blood drain is cut in a medicine writing round and round the shaft.

SIMWA

What magic has it?

THE CHISERA

That however far and feebly it is shot, it flies straight to the mark, over hills and high mountains, in the dark or light, and death rides upon its shaft. [*Laughing.*] Why, you could kill even me with this arrow. See, I have sewed it in your quiver, so that you may not mistake it and shoot it away on any slight occasion. It is my latest gift to you, Beloved.

SIMWA

Thanks for the gift, Chisera. Now give me the quiver. I must join the others before the council. The fighting men were painting their faces when I came.

[*A war-whoop is heard at a distance.*]

THE CHISERA

I hear shouting.

SIMWA

I must go quickly. I would not have Padahoon find me here.

THE CHISERA

Yes, he would brood upon it like a sage hen, until he had hatched mischief. Oh, Simwa, though I have prayed the gods until they and I are weary, to keep you safe in this war, yet my heart shakes to see you go. There is a beating in my breast as of the wings of vultures after battle.

SIMWA

You have wearied yourself too much making medicine. If you have no more faith in the gods, have a little in me. If I can go out of Sagharawite as war leader, I shall come back with the spoil of Castac. [*Shouts are heard nearer than before.*] Now I go quickly! [*He turns carelessly from her lingering caress and crosses to the toyon, starting back at the sight of* PADAHOON, *moving noiselessly through the chaparral, blanketed and watchful.*] What has the Sparrow-Hawk eaten when a nabe that he must visit the Chisera on the eve of council.

PADAHOON

I come from the Chief — but I had not expected to find Simwa, the scoffer, before me.

SIMWA

[*Uneasily.*] I have been gathering eagles' feathers for my arrows under Toorape.

PADAHOON

Quite so — and are not the first hunter to find the shortest way past the house of the Medicine Woman — but it is well known that Simwa seeks no charms for himself — The Chief has been asking for you.

[*He passes on to the* CHISERA, *standing stiffly with strained attention by her hut.* SIMWA *hesitates, recovers himself and passes out with the appearance of indifference.*]

Chisera, Rain Wind, Chief of Sagharawite, greets you, and bids me say that at the moth-hour he will be here with the fighting men to invite the favour of the gods in this war with Castac.

THE CHISERA

And before that ——?

PADAHOON

There will be a Council —

THE CHISERA

To choose a war leader.

PADAHOON

So the Chief has said.

THE CHISERA

And is it the purpose of the Council to put this election to the gods?

PADAHOON

It may come to that — [*A pause.*] Chief Rain Wind is a dotard. What should a woman know of these matters?

THE CHISERA

All that the gods are thinking in their hearts.

PADAHOON

The gods, ay! But what word have the gods of the affairs of Sagharawite except as you carry it? Now between us — Chisera ——

THE CHISERA

What is there between us, Padahoon, that our talk should be otherwise than appears at the Council?

PADAHOON

There should be a matter of two doeskins, tanned white and fine, [*He produces them from under his blanket.*] if the gods are friendly. Look, Chisera!

[*He spreads them out before the* CHISERA, *who is seated by the hut, feathering a prayer-stick.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Pointing to the arrow slit in the skin.*] Now, by the look of that mark, you must have had arrows of Simwa.

PADAHOON

[*Dropping the doeskins negligently.*] Oh, the man can make an arrow.

[*As he stands again, his hands are folded inside his arms; he is not so sure of his errand.*]

THE CHISERA

But not lead a war party?

PADAHOON

A war leader, Chisera, should be neither old and timid, nor young and over-bold, but of middle years and discretion; not so hot in his heart that his head cannot reason with it, nor so reasonable that it cools his heart.

THE CHISERA

Like . . . Padahoon.

PADAHOON

[*Wheedling.*] What will the gods think of a blanket of the Navajoes — [*He spreads it out before her.*] thick and fine — and four strings of shells — and a cake of mesquite meal —?

THE CHISERA

Are the gods a-cold, Padahoon, that you bring them a blanket? Is there hunger in their camp, think you?

PADAHOON

Let the things stay in yours, Chisera; they will remind you to speak well of me when you go before the Friend of the Soul of Man.

THE CHISERA

Put up your pack, Padahoon!

PADAHOON

It is a little matter, Chisera; a handful of sticks thrown on the ground. What should the gods care

for a handful of sticks? And the blanket is very thick. Shall I leave it a little while, that you may admire it?

THE CHISERA

Put up your pack, Padahoon, and learn not to think so lightly of the gods, lest they visit it upon you!

PADAHOON

[*Reluctantly putting up the bribe; after a pause, revolving new measures.*] Chisera, this is a man's business which comes before you in the Council. Will you hear man-talk from me?

THE CHISERA

Is it possible the Great Hawk does so much credit to my understanding?

PADAHOON

Chisera, we have had peace now at Sagharawite so many summers that scarcely a man of us besides myself has seen battle; also we are a little outnumbered. Have you thought, Chisera, what will come to Sagharawite if we go out under an untried leader?

THE CHISERA

What will come will be as the gods determine. What reason have you to think they will favour you more than Simwa?

PADAHOON

It is my experience, Chisera, that the gods are inclined to the better man. And, look you, Chisera, this is perhaps my last chance to serve my people.

Comes another war, if there are enough of us left after this to make another war possible, I shall be too old for leadership. And I have that in me which I would prove before I die. This is man-talk, Chisera. Do you understand it?

THE CHISERA

I understand that you want greatly this election, but I can do nothing except as the gods declare. Put up your pack, Padahoon, I have work to do. [*Rising.*]

PADAHOON

[*Putting up his pack.*] How much did Simwa give you?

THE CHISERA

[*Startled.*] Simwa! [*Recovering herself.*] The Arrow Maker of Sagharawite leaves all higher matters where they belong.

PADAHOON

Simwa put trust in the gods! Simwa believe that by singing and dancing and waving of arms, with a rag of buckskin and a hair of your head and three leaves of a seldom-flowering plant, you can turn the fortunes of war? This will be news for the fighting men, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

[*Quivering, but controlling herself.*] Padahoon, now by this I am minded to prove what the gods can do against tale-bearers and snakes in the grass! [*Balancing her medicine stick for a moment, she seems on*

the point of invoking the gods against him, but thinks better of it.] Nay, but the gods have greater affairs. [*Sound of the drums in the direction of the camp.*] Now I go about to prepare strong medicine so that you shall know, Padahoon, how the gods choose between you and the Arrow Maker.

[*She goes into the hut and lets fall the curtain. Enter certain of the old men and boys to prepare for the council.*]

WINNEDUMAH

Is the Chisera advised of the Council?

PADAHOON

Even now she prepares herself in the wickiup. Where is the Chief?

WINNEDUMAH

He stays only until the fighting men are gathered together.

PADAHOON

I will join them. See that the Chisera is not disturbed before her time. [*He goes out.*]

WINNEDUMAH

Over there in front of the wickiup, one of you light the medicine fire, but do not light it until the Chisera comes. [YAVI *and another prepare the fire.*]

YAVI

How is it that the Chisera will discover the will of the gods?

WINNEDUMAH

Spread a blanket there, where the Chief and the Chisera will sit — [*To* YAVI.] By the casting of the seven sacred sticks. As the gods will they make the sticks to fall in a sign that she can read.

YAVI

Is it so that the Medicine Worker sometimes fails?

WINNEDUMAH

Medicine men have died at it before now — and better so, for otherwise they should have died by the law.

YAVI

Is that the law?

WINNEDUMAH

Surely, surely. For of what use is an advocate with the gods if he cannot get to them. It would be so with the Chisera.

[*As the preparations have gone forward, the sound of the drums and rattles, with an occasional subdued whoop, has drawn nearer, and the fighting men, led by the* CHIEF, *in full fighting gear, arrive in single file in line to the drums. The procession breaks into groups in the open space before the* CHISERA'S *hut.*]

CHIEF

Chisera, come to Council! [*She enters from the hut in full ceremonial dress.*] Let the Council sit.

[*Eleven of the elders seat themselves in a circle about*

the fire, turning toward the CHIEF. *The others stand or sit attentively in the background.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Advancing to his side.*] Rain Wind, Chief of Sagharawite, what will you have of me?

[WINNEDUMAH *lights the medicine fire.*]

CHIEF

To carry a matter too hard for us before the Friend of the Soul of Man.

THE CHISERA

Nothing that men contrive in their hearts is too hard for the gods. Speak, then!

[*Goes and sits beside* CHIEF.]

CHIEF

Tribesmen, for as many years as a fir tree needs to bear cones, I have been Chief in Sagharawite. Now I am old, and, like a badger, see only my own trail — [*Grunts of dissent.*] and my legs carry me no further than my eyes see. Therefore, since there is war with Castac concerning the piñon trees which are ours, [*Grunts and exclamations.*] it is right you have a younger man to lead you. But, since it has never happened that there must be a war leader chosen while there is a chief alive and sitting in council, I think it well to inquire how the gods stand toward us. Tribesmen, what do you say?

[*Sits with great dignity.*]

CHOCO

[*Speaking with great deliberation and winning sober approval.*] Chief Rain Wind has said. The occasion is strange and the candidates of such diverse but equal merit that it is not possible for a just man to choose between them. Let the Chisera carry it to the gods.

WINNEDUMAH

Ay, to the gods with it: who knows but the difficulty is of their devising?

[*A murmur of approval from the Council.*]

TAVWOTS

Tribesmen, I am as much as any man for the gods in matters which are within their province, but this is a plain affair of the tribal use. Let the leadership go where it belongs, with years and experience, and do not weary the gods to do for us what we can very well do for ourselves before we come to the greater matter.

WINNEDUMAH

What greater matter is before us than the choice of a war leader?

TAVWOTS

The goodwill of the gods to be on our side when we meet with the men of Castac.

[*This is thought well of by the bystanders.*]

CHOCO

And will they not then pour out favour more freely on a leader of their own choosing?

[*General approval.*]

CHIEF

This is truth which Choco says — whom the gods will favour they favour. They are not greatly bound to the choice of men.

THE COUNCIL

Good counsel! good counsel!

[*Assent from the bystanders.*]

TAVWOTS

[*Rising, with earnestness.*] Tribesmen, I am not myself of two minds in this business. I speak freely for Padahoon according to our custom which is, without discredit to the Arrow Maker, for the leadership of the elder. But at least let us remember that the gods have high affairs; they are not always listening to the gossip of the camp fire and the hut. What word have they of Sagharawite except as the Chisera carries it? If we put the choice to them, let her know what we are thinking in our hearts. Let Simwa and Great Hawk declare it so that we and the gods shall know how they stand toward the conduct of this war. I have said.

[*Seats himself amid general approval.*]

OLD MEN

Good counsel! Good counsel!

TRIBESMEN

Simwa! Padahoon! The Arrow Maker! Padahoon!

CHIEF

Padahoon, you have the more years; say what you will do, and do you, Chisera, bear it well in your heart as you go up before the Friend of the Soul of Man.

THE CHISERA

The trail of the gods is hard and none may walk therein save those that walk sincerely. Speak, then!

PADAHOON

[*Rising.*] Chief and Tribesmen, you know me. What I think in my heart, I say; and what I say I do. The piñon trees are ours, since the time of our fathers' fathers — [*General assent.*] and this is a vain fight for the men of Castac. Inasmuch as they have crossed our borders, they do evilly, but they are also Paiutes, as we are, and sons of the Bear. Aforetime when the Tecuyas came against us, they were as our brothers. Now, were I war leader, I should leave them at Pahrump and, going up behind the ridge of Toorape, strike at their villages. When we have their women and children and their stores, we can make terms with our brothers of Castac. So shall we save our honour and our allies.

INDIANS

Good counsel! Ugh! Huh! Padahoon! Good counsel!

CHIEF

Speak, Simwa!

SIMWA

[*Rising.*] Shall I call a thief my brother, and is a poacher my fellow that I should respect him? Sons of the Bear are the men of Castac? Ay, bastard sons, and the coyote is their mother. [*Grunts and cries of approval.*] The Castacs have filled up our springs and driven our deer. They have stalked our hunters in the hills — [*Grunts.*] Ay, but we have given the stalkers arrows of ours to keep. [*Grunts of satisfaction.*] Shall we go after our arrows, men of Sagharawite, or shall we wait until our "brothers" of Castac come and stroke us? I am not so old as Padahoon, nor so wise, but, by the Bear that fathered us, were I war leader for the space of one moon, there would be no more men of Castac to trouble our harvest.

INDIANS

Simwa! Simwa! The Arrow Maker!

OLD MEN

Padahoon! Padahoon!

CHIEF

Tribesmen, the wisdom of Padahoon is sound, and such as every man has in his own head; but the speech of Simwa is a water of mirage about our understanding. Shall we try what the gods will do? [*Nods and grunts of approval.*]

OLD MEN

The gods — the Chisera — the Chisera!

CHIEF

The best of the spoil of Castac is yours, Chisera, if the choice be fortunate.

THE CHISERA

[*Rising to begin.*] I want no spoil; this is also my quarrel. How will you have the venture tried?

INDIANS

The sticks! The sacred sticks!

[*The* CHISERA *produces the sticks from her medicine bag, and hands them to one of the Old Men. To each of the others who will dance with her (five or six) she gives a fetich from her bag. They have already put on appropriate head-dresses and are prepared for dancing. She motions the rattles to begin. Behind her are the Old Men, with the drums and rattles; on each side, the Fighting Men seated on the ground. The dance begins, the* CHISERA *singing. The Old Men keep up a crooning accompaniment; from time to time the Fighting Men join the singing and exhibit a growing excitement as the dance progresses. At the last, the* CHISERA, *whirling rapidly, falls to the ground. Instantly the rattles are stopped, and the people wait in suspense the word of the gods. The women are seen to steal up through the toyon bushes. The* CHISERA *lifts herself slowly on one elbow, as if waking from a drugged sleep. She stretches out her hand for the sacred sticks. She drops them with a quick turn of the wrist, gathers them up and drops them again, seeking for an augury. She throws up the arm with the medicine stick and begins to chant.*]

THE CHISERA

The bows of Castac shall be broken.
The bow-strings shall break asunder.
The bows of thy foes shall be broken and the vultures come to battle.

[*Excitement and confusion.*]

INDIANS

The omen, the omen! the war leader!

THE CHISERA

[*Chanting.*] The Maker of Arrows shall lead you.
He that makes arrows of eagles' feathers,
Arrow Maker of Sagharawite, he shall lead you,
Simwa shall break the bows of Castac.

OMNES

Simwa!

[*The Indians break into a great shout for* SIMWA. RAIN WIND *puts a collar of bears' claws about* SIMWA'S *neck, lifts his war-bonnet and places it on his head.* SIMWA *raises his war club with a great shout, dancing about the half-prostrate form of the* CHISERA, *the Fighting Men one by one falling into the dance with wild exultant movements, chanting.*]

The bows of Castac shall be broken!
The bow-strings shall break asunder!
He shall break the bows of Castac!

CURTAIN

ACT SECOND

ACT SECOND

SCENE. — *The campody of Sagharawite, three months later, near the new wickiup of the Arrow Maker. At the right, the house of* RAIN WIND, *and behind all, a spring under a clump of dwarf oaks. A little trail runs between stones to connect the Arrow Maker with the rest of the campody, and beyond it the valley rises gently to the Sierra foothills, brooding under the spring haze. A little to the fore of* SIMWA'S *house lies a great heap of blankets, baskets and camp utensils, displayed to the best advantage, the wedding dower of the Chief's daughter. By her father's house* BRIGHT WATER *is being dressed for bridal by her young companions. They braid her hair, paint her face, tie her moccasins and arrange her beads over the robe of white doeskin; they laugh as they work and are happily important as is the custom of bridesmaids.*

At the left and back SIMWA, TAVWOTS *and others are gambling with dice made of halves of black walnut hulls, filled with pitch, the numbers indicated by bits of shell embedded in the pitch. They are shaken in a small basket and turned out on a basket plaque. The older men look on, smoking.* TAVWOTS *is broad-faced and merry, and does not neglect to ogle the girls at intervals, which causes them to giggle and hide their heads in their blankets. The men have*

on their holiday dress, especially the younger companions of SIMWA.

TAVWOTS

[*Throwing.*] Five!

SIMWA

[*Throwing.*] And five again!

INDIANS

Hi! Hi!

TAVWOTS

Four!

SIMWA

Seven! [*Exclamations.*]

SEEGOOCHE

[*Bringing a blanket.*] Here, let us spread the blanket where the newly-married pair shall sit when first my daughter comes to her husband's house.

[*The women assist her, spreading it in front of* SIMWA'S *house.*]

TIAWA

And this time next year, may you be a grandmother.

SEEGOOCHE

I pray so. Tomorrow I shall go to the Chisera and get a charm to make it sure.

WACOBA

Does not the Chisera come to the wedding?

SEEGOOCHE

I wished it so, but Simwa has no faith in magic medicine. He thinks we show her too much respect because of her mumblings and wavings of arms.

WACOBA

It would have been neighbourly to invite her.

TIAWA

I should be afraid lest some mischief came of this neglect.

SEEGOOCHE

So am I; but Simwa would not have her asked.

[*She passes to her own hut and brings out grain and pine nuts, with which the other women fill their ceremonial baskets.*]

TIAWA

No doubt Simwa feels that the gods have done so much for him that he can afford to dispense with an advocate.

HAIWAI

[*Who has approached unnoticed.*] Small wonder he thinks so when you remember how he brought our men back scatheless with the spoil of Castac. Seegooche, I bring the best of my share to grace your daughter's wedding. [*Offers basket.*]

SEEGOOCHE

[*Taking it and handing it about.*] My thanks to you. [*Noticing the papoose which she carries strapped in a basket at her back.*] And who is this that comes to my house uninvited?

HAIWAI

Nay, but he came to mine but five days since; and already he grips like a man!

[*Showing him about proudly.*]

TIAWA

Hey, little warrior!

TUIYO

Ah, let me have him, Haiwai! I will hold him carefully.

[*Still seated, she reaches up her arms for the child and coos over it.*]

BRIGHT WATER

Let me! [*Takes the basket from* TUIYO *and rocks the basket, crooning.*]

"Hey, little dove, hush, little dove,
'Tis the wind rocking
Thy nest in the pine tree.
Hey, little dove."

WHITE FLOWER

Chief's Daughter, do you think you will be able to do so well by your husband?

[BRIGHT WATER *gives back the child to its mother in great confusion.*]

HAIWAI

Oh, never fear that the luck of the Arrow Maker will desert him for that!

SEEGOOCHE

Do not plague her. [*The women return to their*

work.] It is the way with maids, the nearer they are to mothering the less they wish to hear of it.

TIAWA

Still I would see the Chisera if I were you. It is a pity she is not invited.

TUIYO

[*Painting* BRIGHT WATER.] Tell me, Seegooche, do I put the white on her cheeks too, or only on the forehead.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Alarmed.*] No, no white at all, not on her wedding day. It is an evil omen.

TUIYO

[*Wiping it off hastily.*] Then I will take it off again. All the misfortune be on my head.

BRIGHT WATER

Never fear, mother, I am so defended by happiness no evil could get at me.

WHITE FLOWER

Besides, the bride of Simwa need fear no omens. The luck of her husband will protect her.

TUIYO

[*With a final touch.*] There, come to the spring and see how lovely you are.

[*The girls all rise.*]

TAVWOTS

That's a bad medicine you make for us unmarried men.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Standing forth in her bridal array.*] Is it so bad, Simwa?

[SIMWA *answers with his eyes.*]

TAVWOTS

Already he is speechless, and I have staked him my collar of elks' teeth as a charm against it.

BRIGHT WATER

Tavwots, you have eaten meadow-larks' tongues. If you had a wife, you would keep her in a gambling basket. [*At the spring.*] Now I need only flowers for my hair. Let us go get them.

[*The girls go out.*]

TAVWOTS

[*Throwing down his collar of elks' teeth.*] By the Bear, Simwa, I do not know how it is you persuade the gods to be always on your side. First you are made war leader, then you marry the Chief's daughter, and now you have my collar of elks' teeth to top all.

SIMWA

[*Gathering up the stakes.*] Will you take a chance to have it back again?

TAVWOTS

I would, if I had anything to stake you, but my luck has left me nothing but my shirt.

SIMWA

I will play you for that.

TAVWOTS

Not until after the wedding. [*Rises.*]

SIMWA

As you like. Your shirt against the collar. Do you play, friends?

FIRST INDIAN

Not I.

YAVI

Nor I. The luck is all to Simwa. [*All rise.*]

TAVWOTS

Yes. One would think he had been courting the Chisera.

SIMWA

[*Who has risen, turning sharply.*] How?

TAVWOTS

I said I could not guess how you manage to be always winning, unless you have made love to the Chisera, and she has persuaded the gods for you. [*Slapping him on the back.*] Why, this is the first time you were ever accused of love-making and looked sourly over it!

SIMWA

[*Smirking.*] No fault of mine if the women like a good figure.

TAVWOTS

No advantage either from this time henceforward. Here comes Chief Rain Wind to marry you to his daughter.

CHIEF

[*Issuing from his wickiup in full holiday dress, blanketed.*] Where is she?

SEEGOOCHE

She gathers flowers with her young companions. She comes presently.

CHIEF

Bid the married women prepare to bless the bridal. Are the guests all here?

SEEGOOCHE

Choco and the others who went out to hunt early this morning have not yet returned.

CHIEF

I would speak with them when they come. And Padahoon?

TAVWOTS

I do not know, unless he visits the Chisera.

SIMWA

[*Startled.*] Padahoon?

TAVWOTS

So often does he go to her house, if he did not have a wife already, I should think he had an eye to her. The best cut of my next kill against my shirt, Simwa,

that he goes to find ways to make good against you the loss of the leadership.

SIMWA

[*Complacently.*] Padahoon cannot forgive me the victory at Castac.

TAVWOTS

Well, if the Tecuya Creek tribes keep up their quarrelling, we are all likely to wish you had not killed off so many of their fighting men.

SIMWA

I shall deal with the Tecuyas as I did with Castac.

TAVWOTS

The gods were with you. Next time Padahoon may win the Chisera to be on his side.

SIMWA

[*Suspiciously.*] What do you mean? Am I not leader of Sagharawite?

TAVWOTS

So long as we and the gods approve you. But if I were the gods, and the Chisera came dancing before me ——

CHIEF

Tavwots, your wit misleads you. The Chisera is not a subject for jest or the favour of men; she is an advocate with the gods for us.

TAVWOTS

Well, the gods have a handsome advocate. I

should give her anything she asked. [*Looking off.*] See, bridegroom, the girls are dancing, and you not with them!

[Simwa *and the younger men go out.*]

Chief

[*Detaining* Tavwots.] Tavwots, what do you know of this Tecuya Creek matter?

Tavwots

More than I like to spoil a feast-day with.

Chief

Nevertheless, tell it.

Tavwots

They have forbidden all the campodies east of us from fishing in the river. Also they watch all the trails toward Toorape and take toll of passers.

Chief

On what grounds?

Tavwots

None, I think, except that they are able. A bowman of Tehachappi inquired of me how many fell at Castac, and I, thinking to glorify the tribe, — I told him.

Chief

What said he to that?

Tavwots

What I should have expected. He grinned upon

me like a sick coyote and said, "They are poor allies, the dead."

INDIANS

Ugh! huh! ugh!

CHIEF

Here are the hunters. They will know if there is mischief stirring.

[*Enter from the left,* CHOCO *and* PAMAQUASH *and another, carrying game.*]

TAVWOTS

And with the Arrow Maker's own luck!

CHOCO

So far as the quarry goes.

CHIEF

But not for the hunters —?

CHOCO

[*To him.*] Send the younger men away. I have a word for you.

CHIEF

You, Fleet-foot, Yavi, all of you — carry the game to the women and help them dress it for the feast. [*The young men take up the game and go out, leaving* CHOCO, TAVWOTS *and the* OLD MEN *with the* CHIEF.] Let us hear your word, Choco.

CHOCO

[*Taking a long arrow from under his blanket.*] What make you of that?

CHIEF

[*Examining it.*] Tecuya Creek, surely.

OLD MEN

[*Handing it about.*] Tecuya — Tecuya.

CHIEF

Where did you find it?

CHOCO

Where I liked least to see it — in the body of a friend.

MEN

Ah-a-a-ah!

CHIEF

What friend?

CHOCO

Winnedumah. He went out to the hunt yesterday and was to have joined us this morning at Deer Leap. I found him by the crossing of the trails, with that through him.

CHIEF

Bad business. What say you it means?

CHOCO

That the Tecuyas think we dare not avenge it.

CHIEF

Dare not! Simwa must hear of this, but not on his wedding day. Tomorrow we will take counsel. I would I might have a word with Padahoon.

TAVWOTS

He is there on the barranca; I will call him. Oh — ee, Padahoon!

PADAHOON

[*Appearing on the barranca.*] What now? [*Ironically.*] Can not the Arrow Maker so much as take a wife without calling all the tribes to witness? [*Coming down the barranca, noting their gravity.*] What has happened? Is the Council called?

CHIEF

For tomorrow. In the meantime there is this. [*Handing up the arrow.*]

PADAHOON

[*Standing half-way down the bank as he examines it.*] An arrow of Tecuya. Blood? Blood of Sagharawite?

TAVWOTS

Of Winnedumah.

PADAHOON

[*Blazing forth.*] By the Bear that fathered us! It is likely to prove an open wound in the honor of Sagharawite. Not ten sleeps have passed since the last of our fighting men returned from the killing of our blood brothers, and already we have a witness to our folly! The Tecuyas are three to one of us.

PAMAQUASH

But the luck of Simwa is more than three times that of Tecuya.

PADAHOON

The fortunes of Simwa! What are they but the accidents of time and weather. A landslip on the trail, a rain storm that wetted their bow-strings and left ours dry. The rain has slacked your wits, Rain Wind, that you are not able to distinguish between the Arrow Maker and his luck.

CHIEF

The witness of the gods in his favour.

PADAHOON

The gods are not always so attentive. Where was the luck of the Arrow Maker that it has not saved us from this? [*Shaking the arrow as he descends.*] Show me something which we owe to Simwa if you would have me trust in him.

CHIEF

I will show you the pit of your own heart, Padahoon, and the adder that bites at the root of it. You are jealous of the fame and the office of Simwa, but you shall not sink your venom in the minds of the fighting men.

PADAHOON

I would I could sting them to understand that if Tecuya comes against us, they will not trust so much to luck as to war craft.

CHIEF

Understand yourself that whatever comes of this business of Tecuya, Simwa is still war leader. You

are too old a man, Padahoon, to be told that whoever lessens the credit of the war leader saps at the strength of Sagharawite.

PADAHOON

Ay, I am an old man and in my dotage when I seek to set years of good faith and experience against the fortunate moments of a fool.

CHIEF

The Chief has spoken. No more of this until the Council. In the meantime, not a word to the women. It is an ill omen for a feast.

[*He goes out, followed by all but* TAVWOTS *and* PADAHOON.]

TAVWOTS

[*Laying his hand on the shoulder of* PADAHOON.] By the Bear, Padahoon, I have been on your side in this matter heretofore, but now I think the Chief is right. It is an ill business setting men against the war leader in a time of danger.

PADAHOON

You too, Tavwots — you have looked at the lure of the Arrow Maker's luck and do not see the snare which his want of wit spreads for your feet?

TAVWOTS

[*Uncertainly.*] But if the fortune of Simwa is not his own, from whence is it?

PADAHOON

Tell me, Tavwots, when another man seeks favour from the gods, by whom does it come?

TAVWOTS

By the Chisera. But what ——

PADAHOON

On the morning of the election, when I went from the Chief to advise the Chisera, I met Simwa by her hut.

PAMAQUASH

I also met him when I came back from Leaping Water to bring word to the women — he said he had been gathering eagles' feathers for his arrows.

PADAHOON

So he said to me. Feathers for arrows when every man had his quiver full at his back!

TAVWOTS

But Simwa puts no faith in magic medicine. Why, he has not even asked the Chisera to his wedding!

PADAHOON

No, not even though the Chief's daughter urged it. [*A pause full of significance.*]

TAVWOTS

No, no! Padahoon! Unless the Chisera owned to it herself, I would not believe it. The Chief is right. The wound of your jealousy festers and corrupts

your tongue. [*Turning his back on* PADAHOON *he claps* PAMAQUASH *on the shoulder.*] Come and dance!

CHOCO

[*Gathering his blanket around him.*] Even if the Chisera owned it, I would not believe it.

[*The men move in the direction of the merry-making and are met by the younger people, laughing and shouting for* SIMWA. PADAHOON *watches them bitterly for a while, and, revolving many things, draws his blanket up and departs in the direction of the* CHISERA'S *hut.*

YOUNG MEN

[*Surrounding* SIMWA *and crowding him forward.* Hey, Simwa, a speech! A speech from the War Leader!

PAMAQUASH

Come, Arrow Maker, a speech for your bridal.

[*Laughter and approval.*]

SIMWA

[*Drunk with popularity.*] The War Leader loves deeds rather than talking.

TAVWOTS

We have seen what your fighting is like. Give us a speech.

SIMWA

Friends and Tribesmen, the fortune of Simwa is Simwa. Does the Bear take weapons against the woodchuck, and shall the Sons of the Bear make charms against their enemies? The spoil of Castac

is in our camp [*Cheers.*] and our young men hunt within their borders. [*Applause.*] If any of the tribes inquire where are the fullest harvests, the fattest deer, the prettiest maidens, [*He flings his blanket about* BRIGHT WATER.] bid him look for the land of Simwa the Arrow Maker. [*Shouts and laughter.*]

YOUNG MEN

Come, now, a dance, a dance! Tavwots, dance for us!

[*The cries increasing,* TAVWOTS *is pushed forward to dance, others cry for* PAMAQUASH *and* YAVI, *who join* TAVWOTS, *laughing, to dance the blanket dance, all the others singing and keeping time with swaying bodies. The girls hover about the dancers, and as at certain points in the dance the* YOUNG MEN *attempt to cast their blankets about the heads of the girls, they duck and squeal. Finally, amid much laughter, each dancer captures a girl, rubbing his cheek against hers, the Indian equivalent of a kiss. With great merriment the crowd moves off in the direction of the mesa, disclosing* PADAHOON *and the* CHISERA, *who have come up unobserved.*]

PADAHOON

Come this way, Chisera. The girls are out on the mesa, dancing with the bride, and the women are grinding at the metate for the marriage feast.

THE CHISERA

But where is Simwa?

PADAHOON

With the bride, no doubt. Here is his wickiup, and here the marriage dower beside it.

THE CHISERA

All this?

PADAHOON

Never so many gifts went to a wedding in Sagharawite. Every woman whose man came back safe from the war gave a basket or a blanket, and Simwa gave all of his share of the spoil of Castac.

THE CHISERA

And that, I doubt not, is bitter for you to see, Padahoon.

PADAHOON

Why, as to that, Chisera, it is good to see spoil of our foes in the camp; but the fighting men of Castac were our blood brothers. See, here is the blanket where the newly-married pair shall sit to receive the blessings of the fruitful women.

THE CHISERA

[*Bitterly.*] But not the blessing of the Chisera. Never before, in my time, has there been a bride in Sagharawite but sent to ask my blessing.

PADAHOON

Ay, but Simwa does not believe in charms and spells. [*The* CHISERA *seems about to break out angrily, but restrains herself.* PADAHOON *watches her narrowly as he speaks.*] Look, Chisera! Is not the

bride fair? Fit to set a man beside himself with desiring?

THE CHISERA

She is but a child. Her breasts are scarcely grown. No fit mate for a war leader.

PADAHOON

[*Watching her.*] But a man so well furnished with wisdom need not look for it in a wife. Is it not so, Chisera?

THE CHISERA

Padahoon, why do you tell me this?

PADAHOON

[*With the appearance of candour.*] As often as I came to your house to get medicine, you asked me for news of the campody, and seemed best pleased with news of Simwa, the war leader; and with reason, since he has become the most notable man of the Paiutes. Yet, when I told you he was to be married today to the Chief's daughter, you were slow to believe. Now tell me if I have lied, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

You have not lied, Padahoon, but Simwa, he has lied in his heart. How long have you known this?

PADAHOON

Since the time of the Taboose.

THE CHISERA

And why not told me?

PADAHOON

How could I think the Chisera wished to know? It was a thing you might have heard from the women grinding meal or weaving baskets. But the Chisera does not often come to the village, except there is illness.

THE CHISERA

I have no time to gossip with the women. I have to go before the gods for them and their children.

PADAHOON

And now that you are told, what will you do?

THE CHISERA

Is there so much to do?

PADAHOON

Only to give him your blessing.

THE CHISERA

[*Bitterly.*] Did I not give him that at Castac? [*Begins to search about among* SIMWA'S *effects.*]

PADAHOON

What seek you, Chisera?

THE CHISERA

The arrow! the quiver! Surely Simwa does not dance at his wedding wearing his quiver?

PADAHOON

No; but when he is not wearing it, no man knows where he hides it.

THE CHISERA

[*Searching.*] The quiver! I must find the quiver!

PADAHOON

'T is said he has a magic arrow in it of such power he would have it fall into no man's hands.

THE CHISERA

[*Muttering.*] Ay, the arrow; the black arrow.

PADAHOON

Chisera, why does this marriage disturb you?

THE CHISERA

Padahoon, why should you think it disturbs me?

PADAHOON

You have come.

THE CHISERA

Why should not one maid come to the marriage of another? There is scarce two summers' difference between me and the Chief's daughter.

PADAHOON

Yes, but you come in your blanket. Such has not been your custom when you have come among us on errands of healing; then you dressed sumptuously, as befitted one bearing the word of the gods. Now you come like an angry woman who would hide what is in her heart.

THE CHISERA

[*With dignity.*] Cover your own heart, Padahoon,

lest I ask what mischief breeds in it to bid you observe me so much. I have not forgot that you would have paid me a blanket to be made war leader in the room of Simwa.

SPARROW-HAWK

[*With ugly insinuation.*] Ugh! huh! Perhaps I had been as fortunate as the Arrow Maker, if, instead of giving it, I had offered to share it with you.

THE CHISERA

Kima! Padahoon, you do tempt me to try if I can curse.

PADAHOON

[*Conciliatory.*] I have no wish to anger the Friend of the gods, but I am a plain man wishing good to my campody and it seems not good to me that Simwa has grown suddenly so great.

THE CHISERA

[*Recovering herself.*] What has that to do with the Chisera?

PADAHOON

I have known this Simwa since he was first tied in a basket, and, though he has grown to be war leader, I think he is most like a pod of rattleweed that is swollen to twice its size at the end of the season, yet has no more in it than at the beginning. And I do not know how, without the help of magic medicine, he has come to be what he is with so little in him.

THE CHISERA

The Chief's daughter has trusted him.

PADAHOON

She loves him. [*During this scene, bursts of Indian music and singing have been heard at intervals. It grows louder.* PADAHOON *and* CHISERA *look off.*] They come this way, Chisera. You are right. When a man has married so fair a wife, there is not much left to be done for him.

THE CHISERA

[*With bitter irony, as she moves over against* SIMWA'S *hut and puts up her blanket.*] I am not so sure.

TIAWA

It is Chisera.

SEEGOOCHE

[*With alarm.*] Where is my daughter?

[BRIGHT WATER *enters with the young girls, laughing and talking. Her hair is braided with golden poppies and falls over her shoulders. She sees the* CHISERA *standing, tall and still, by* SIMWA'S *hut, her whole figure shrouded in a blanket, which is drawn up to cover all of her face but the eyes.*]

BRIGHT WATER

Who is it comes to my wedding uninvited? How her eyes burn upon me!

SEEGOOCHE

Hush! She will hear you. It is the Chisera.

BRIGHT WATER

The Chisera? Never have I seen her like this. But she has come to bring me a blessing?

SEEGOOCHE

Do not speak to her, my daughter; she is not in the humour for it.

BRIGHT WATER

Shall I not be courteous to the first guest who has come to my husband's house? Chisera, I am pleased that you have come to bless my marriage.

THE CHISERA

[*Out of her blanket.*] Where is Simwa?

BRIGHT WATER

He comes soon. [*Going to her.*] Last night I thought of you, and how you, alone of all Sagharawite, had kept away from my happiness ——

SEEGOOCHE

Let be, daughter. [*Pulling her sleeve.*] It is ill stirring a coiled snake. [*To the* CHISERA, *with intent to draw her off.*] Come this way, Chisera, and I will show you the wedding presents.

THE CHISERA

[*Lowering her blanket a little.*] Show me the Arrow Maker.

[*The elder men have entered, among them* RAIN WIND.]

CHIEF

What is this?

TIAWA

It is the Chisera asking for Simwa.

MEN

Ah! ah! ahah!

[*Exchanging glances of inquiry and amazement.*]

CHIEF

Who is that behind her?

WACOBA

Padahoon!

MEN

Ugh! huh!

CHIEF

So? Why does she cover her face?

TIAWA

She makes medicine in her blanket.

[*The Indians draw close in two groups, the women together and the men on the other side. They watch the* CHISERA *uneasily.* BRIGHT WATER *stands a little apart, the bridesmaids moving timidly toward the elder women.*

THE CHISERA

[*Putting down her blanket.*] The Arrow Maker of Sagharawite is slow to the bridal.

BRIGHT WATER

He comes. He comes.

[*The young men enter, with* SIMWA *in their midst,*

painted and befeathered as befits a handsome brave on his wedding day. Observing the CHISERA, *he checks and falters in his walk.*]

SIMWA

Chisera!

THE CHISERA

Is it you, Simwa, who wed with the Chief's daughter?

SIMWA

You are come, Chisera —— [*Wholly at a loss.*] You are come ——

THE CHISERA

I am come to your marriage, Simwa, though I am not invited.

BRIGHT WATER

But now that she is here, Simwa, you will ask her to bless us?

SIMWA

[*Recovering himself with an effort.*] Surely, surely. But the married women have not blessed us yet. [*Taking the bride's hand and leading her to the blanket. They seat themselves.*] Come, Tiawa, have you no pine nuts in your basket? [*With an effort to carry it off jovially.*] What! will you have my wife dig roots before her wedding year is out?

[*The married women take up their baskets and begin the ceremony of sprinkling the bride with nuts and seeds in token of fruitfulness.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Warningly.*] Simwa! Simwa!

[*The women leave off, huddling together, looking fearfully at the* CHISERA.]

SEEGOOCHE

[*Getting between her and* BRIGHT WATER.] What harm to you, Chisera, if the Arrow Maker weds where he loves?

THE CHISERA

[*Looking steadily at* SIMWA.] Aye — where he loves — [*Pleadingly.*] Simwa! Simwa!

[*She droops in her blanket and turns away.*]

SEEGOOCHE

[*Lifting her basket to her shoulder again.*] Let us go on with the marriage.

PADAHOON

[*To the company.*] If the Chisera knows any reason why this marriage should not go on, should she not say it openly? A word half spoken breeds suspicion faster than flies at killing time.

CHIEF

What talk is this of reasons? Have I not the disposing of my daughter in marriage? Reason enough, if I wish it so.

PADAHOON

That which is most reasonable to men, the gods see otherwise.

[*A murmur begins in the camp, but* SIMWA *takes it up instantly.*]

SIMWA

He is thinking of the war with Castac. Truly, you were not eye to eye with the gods on that occasion, Padahoon.

PADAHOON

Were I so sure it was of the gods, I had not stood out so against it.

CHIEF

Was not Simwa approved of the gods through the mouth of the Chisera?

THE CHISERA

So you think.

CHIEF

Is there another arrow maker so skilled between Tehechappi and Tecuya? Are any shafts better fashioned to fly straight to the mark? Is there any hunter knows more surely where the herds feed, or strikes quicker the slot of a deer?

THE CHISERA

As you think.

CHIEF

Let be this talk of reasons. This is mere woman's mischief, to nod and wink and to make signs with the eyebrows. A woman would have you think reason enough for marrying if she liked or misliked it. Chisera, this is no matter for the gods, but a plain mating of man and maid.

THE CHISERA

[*Flashing.*] Since when have you talked with the gods, that you think to lesson me in their business?

CHIEF

Since you have been a father, to know reasons for the bestowal of daughters.

[*Grunts of appreciation.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Letting her blanket slip to her breast.*] Know, then, that if these are your reasons, Rain Wind, there is no more meat in them than in the husk of acorns. If good fortune hangs on all Simwa's movements, it is by reason of the medicine I make that binds him to the favour of the Friend.

SIMWA

[*Leaning on his elbows, with the manner of being quite at ease.*] You are very free with your blessing, Chisera, if it is so; for it is well known in the camp that Simwa, the Arrow Maker, does not believe in charms, nor seek them.

INDIANS

[*Grunting in assent.*] Ugh! huh!

THE CHISERA

[*Letting fall her blanket in a burst of indignation.*] "Nor seek them!" — Ah! Simwa! Simwa!

[*A short pause of embarrassment and consternation ensues. Then* PADAHOON, *in a manner meant to seem impartial* ——]

PADAHOON

The medicine of the Chisera is very powerful, but

one must allow a little credit to the gods. Simwa was chosen war leader by the trial of the seven sticks. As the gods willed, they made the sticks to fall. Is it not so, Chisera?

THE CHISERA

[*Sullenly, from her blanket.*] I do not know. I did not look. [*Letting fall her blanket and speaking proudly.*] I had persuaded the Friend to give victory to the war leader. What should I care for the sticks? A day and a night I made medicine, and the sign was sure. I said "Simwa" and the gods confirmed it.

[*The Indians remain silent, but draw a little away from Simwa.*]

BRIGHT WATER

[*Rising and turning toward her.*] Chisera, why should you make medicine for Simwa?

THE CHISERA

Chief's daughter, do not ask.

BRIGHT WATER

Chief's daughter I am, and wife of the war leader. Why should you concern yourself with his affairs?

THE CHISERA

[*After a pause, with great dignity.*] Because he loved me.

INDIANS

Ah! Ahah! Ah!

SIMWA

[*Laughing.*] The Friend of the gods has eaten rattleweed. Does a man love a wild woman who goes muttering and waving her arms, when she should be weaving and grinding meal? Would he take a wander-thought to his bed, and have witless children? Sooner I had a snake in my hut to run and tattle to the gods of me.

TAVWOTS

[*To* PADAHOON.] Now, if it is true that he owes his fortune to the gods, they have deserted him, else he would not speak so to a jealous woman.

SIMWA

[*Looking long at the* CHISERA, *haggard and unpainted, her blanket trailing, and then to the Chief's daughter, and back again, all the eyes of the campody following.*] Is there any comeliness in a witch, that a man should desire her?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Alarmed.*] Simwa, Simwa! If you have no care for yourself, at least remember my daughter!

SIMWA

[*Rising.*] Have no care, mother. If I do not believe she can bless, neither do you believe that she can curse.

BRIGHT WATER

Mother, let be. If this be true that she speaks, I am already cursed.

SIMWA

[*Going to his wife.*] What have we to do with blessings or cursings? The Chisera is unsound in her mind. I have seen her dancing in the hills sometimes where I went to gather eagles' feathers for my arrows, and her madness has made a curious tale of it.

BRIGHT WATER

I would I might believe you!

SIMWA

[*With returning complacency.*] Do you find it so hard to have a husband whom other women admire?

PADAHOON

Chief and Tribesmen, if it is true that Simwa values charms so little, let him declare what it is he keeps sewed in his quiver so precious that he must hide it even on his wedding day.

[*Murmurs. The* CHISERA, *in alarm, endeavours to check* SCARFACE. SIMWA *turns upon him with a snarl.*]

SIMWA

Kima! [*Wildly.*] You cannot prove that I had it of the Chisera!

PADAHOON

[*Suddenly darting out two fingers from his mouth, moving them rapidly in the manner of a snake's tongue, with a hissing sound.*] Snake of two tongues! Now I know you for the man you are, braggart and liar!

SIMWA

Coyote whelp!

[SIMWA *grasps a war weapon, a stone tied in a crotched stick, from the heap of wedding gifts, and smites* PADAHOON *to the earth, standing threateningly over him. The others stiffen into tense attitudes, drawing their blankets tighter, their eyes burning bright.* PADAHOON *draws the knife that hangs in a sheath at his neck.*

CHIEF

[*Putting* SIMWA *back with a hand at his breast.*] Peace! Though you are made my son by this day's work, you shall not usurp judgment. [*To* PADAHOON, *as* SIMWA *moves slowly back, his weapon lowered.*] What charge do you make?

PADAHOON

[*Rising on his elbow to spit blood.*] Thou art a liar, if ever there was one in Sagharawite, and have nothing which is not owed to the Chisera.

CHIEF

Speak straight, Padahoon, or, by the Bear, I shall let him kill you where you lie.

PADAHOON

Three nights after the return from Tecuya, I saw you at the Chisera's house — and again in the rains — and at the time of Taboose.

CHIEF

Is it so, Chisera?

THE CHISERA

It is so.

PADAHOON

Did you go there for love or profit?

[SIMWA *lets slip his weapon from his hand to the ground.*]

CHIEF

Simwa, if you were the son of my body, I should not know which to believe.

SIMWA

Believe him, if you like. [*Sullenly.*] If a skunk walk in my trail and leave a stink there, shall I go out of my way to deny that it is mine? No doubt the woman is both mad and shameless.

[*Murmurs of indignation.*]

SEEGOOCHE

[*Afraid, but furious.*] Then if you are shameless, begone! Stay not to vex the marriage of a maiden. Go! Have to do with your gods, and leave my daughter.

BRIGHT WATER

Mother! Mother!

THE CHISERA

Shameless, am I, Seegooche? Then there is one of your blood shall know a greater shame. Great hunter does she think her man? Aye, but she shall come to dig roots for him when he fails of the hunt and be glad of the offal the other women give her for pity. For this I say to you, tribesmen of Saghara-

wite, that, though I cannot curse, yet I can take back my blessing.

BRIGHT WATER

All this is of no account, Chisera. No doubt you can contrive against the fame of Simwa, and bespeak the gods to neglect him; I wait to hear what proof you have that he loved you.

SEEGOOCHE

Do not vex her, daughter, lest she turn the gods against you also.

BRIGHT WATER

No matter, mother. What Simwa bears, I can bear. What proof, Chisera?

THE CHISERA

What proof?

[*She turns toward* SIMWA, *faltering. He smiles contemptuously.*]

BRIGHT WATER

That Simwa loved you.

THE CHISERA

[*Slowly, her eyes on* SIMWA.] He came to my hut — in the night — Chief's daughter, [*Boldly.*] even as he comes this night to yours.

BRIGHT WATER

[*Impatiently.*] But did he love you?

THE CHISERA

He made me so believe. [*Looking about and noting*

the lack of conviction.] How else had he held me, since last the poppies bloomed, a lure to snare the favour of the gods? Does he say he was not blessed? Aye, twice blessed. [*She takes from her bosom the amulet.*] Was it not this you gave me to make medicine upon, to keep your lover safe in war? Twice blessed he was; but, as I made my blessing, so do I break it.

[*Drops the amulet and grinds it underfoot.*]

INDIANS

[*Moving uneasily.*] Ah! Ah!

THE CHISERA

And this is the proof that I speak truly. From this day, whoever brings me arrows shall have medicine upon them without price, and who would have news of the passing of the deer shall have it for the asking. Only Simwa shall have nothing but his own wit and the work of his hands, and by what befalls, you shall know the truth.

BRIGHT WATER

By this I know the truth! You never loved him, or you would not now betray him.

THE CHISERA

[*Moving toward the trail.*] And you, Bright Water, that think to lie in your husband's arms this night, know that I have lain there before you. And you shall not dare to laugh as a bride laughs, lest it be to him my voice in the dusk; and if he turns and

sighs in his sleep, you shall wonder if he dreams of the Chisera. Long and anxiously you shall look in the trail when he is late from the hunt, and the men shall mock him that he could not keep the blessing he had got. [BRIGHT WATER *turns despairingly and sinks on the ground, holding her mother by the knees and sobbing bitterly. All the Indians draw away from* SIMWA, *leaving him standing, discomfited in the middle of the camp. All look with awe and dread at the* CHISERA. *She produces a small medicine stick from under her blanket and twirls it with menace. Going.*] As for you, Arrow Maker of Sagharawite, if a man thrived by the favour of the gods rather than his own wit, when that favour is taken away, it shall be worse for him than if he had not known it. And though I cannot curse, yet am I the Friend of the gods, and they have regard to me. Look well to yourself, Simwa. Look well.

CURTAIN

ACT THIRD

ACT THIRD

TIME. — *One year later.*

SCENE. — *The top of Toorape where the tribe has been driven by their enemies of Tecuya. The women and children hide in their holes in the rocks. Off to the right on a jutting boulder, against the sky, stands* YAVI, *as sentinel; two or three wounded lie about. Crouching over the fire are* SEEGOOCHE, WACOBA *and* TIAWA, *showing in their dress and appearance the marks of a year of distress, as do all the others as they appear upon the scene.*

YAVI

[*To them.*] St — st!

WACOBA

[*Rising.*] Some one on the trail!

SEEGOOCHE

What is it?

WACOBA

[*To her.*] Hush! Sh——!

YAVI

The Sparrow Hawk!

SEEGOOCHE

News from the fighting men!

TIAWA

The gods grant it be good news!

[PADAHOON, *weary and with disordered dress, comes clambering up the face of the cliff.*]

YAVI

[*Calling down in a whisper.*] What news?

TIAWA

Are the gods still against us?

PADAHOON

As they have been since the day the Chisera took away her blessing from the war leader.

WOMEN

[*Wailing.*] Ai! Ai!

[*Others come out of the rocks to join in the general grief.*]

WACOBA

If you could but persuade her to give it back again.

PADAHOON

If I cannot, then this is like to be the last fight of Sagharawite!

WACOBA

If you cannot, then must the chief enforce her, for since we were driven from our homes, neither the anguish of the women nor the hunger of the children has moved her.

PADAHOON

I will speak with her at once.

[*He goes up among the rocks, and the women huddle wretchedly together watching.*]

WACOBA

Do you think she will consent?

SEEGOOCHE

She cannot choose but do it. The men have kept her supplied with venison, but she must know that there is hunger in the camp of the women and children.

WACOBA

And that the Tecuyas have taken the best of our fighting men.

TIAWA

But no men of hers. I have always said — but because I am old nobody minds me — that if there was one of her household to go to battle, she would need no persuasion to go before the gods. I would Simwa had given her a child.

WACOBA

[*Aside from* SEEGOOCHE.] Then you believe that he was her lover?

TIAWA

What else? Would any but a jilted woman sit and mope while our wickiups go up in smoke?

WACOBA

I would she had a child, but not Simwa's. One of that breed is enough.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Who has moved nearer the hut.*] Hush, see the curtain! [*They start.*]

TIAWA

It was the wind.

SEEGOOCHE

They say she has not made medicine since my daughter's marriage.

WACOBA

[*Looking off to the right where the mountains dip abruptly valley-ward.*] And to think that even now they must be fighting under Waban.

SEEGOOCHE

Hush! Hush!

[PADAHOON *and the* CHISERA *come out of the hut. The* CHISERA'S *whole appearance is of heartbreak and neglect. She leans against the boulders at the left, holding her blanket close, and answers* PADAHOON *sullenly.*]

PADAHOON

And is this all your answer?

THE CHISERA

The trail is cold between the gods and me.

PADAHOON

Then you will not make medicine?

THE CHISERA

And would not if I could.

PADAHOON

Have you turned renegade, Chisera, and side with our enemies of Tecuya?

THE CHISERA

No, Padahoon, but I see that no good comes of persuading the gods to do more for man than his natural destiny.

PADAHOON

You have always persuaded them to our advantage.

THE CHISERA

What good came of having Simwa made war leader? Had I not persuaded them to meddle with that business, the leadership would have fallen to you as the elder, and we should not now be without allies in our need.

PADAHOON

I am not sure the gods had so much to do with that; but if the mischief came through them, the gods must repair it.

THE CHISERA

I will not make medicine. Send the women away.

PADAHOON

What shall I say to them?

THE CHISERA

To count themselves already blessed in having those for whom they desire blessing. Tell them that to have loved and given the breast is enough to salve the wounds of loss.

PADAHOON

You are hard, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

I am jealous of their griefs. Their very pangs I envy them. Who is there of mine goes to this war that I should grieve for his wounding or look for his return? [*She looks bitterly toward the women who have crept from the caves to peer from the rocks in the direction of the fighting.*] Persuade me no more, Padahoon. I will not do it.

[*She disappears among the rocks to the left, and* PADAHOON *turns to the women who crowd around him anxiously.*]

WACOBA

Has she promised?

TIAWA

Will she help us?

PADAHOON

The Chisera will not make medicine.

WOMEN

[*Rocking themselves to and fro.*] Ai! Ai!

SEEGOOCHE

Is it because our gifts are so small? She should consider how hard it is to get venison in war time.

PADAHOON

Her heart is so full of bitterness that there is no room in it for the gods.

WACOBA

That is Simwa's doing — though he is your son, Seegooche, I must say it — there was no better Chisera between here and Tehachappi until he curdled her wisdom with his lies.

TIAWA

Ah, Simwa! I spit upon his name.

[*The women spit between their teeth with sharp hisses.*]

WACOBA

How the Chisera hates him!

PADAHOON

How she loves him!

TIAWA

[*Struck with this.*] You think so? Yet there is not one word of the evil she said of him a year ago that has not come to pass.

WOMEN

Ai! Ai! On him and us.

PADAHOON

And hate would have been satisfied to strip him of his honours, but now she lets the whole tribe go down in the ruin of her love.

WACOBA

[*Hopefully.*] Then if she loves him, perhaps he can persuade her.

PADAHOON

As well persuade the rattlesnake not to strike him.

SEEGOOCHE

If the Chief should insist, she would not dare refuse him.

PADAHOON

There is little she would not dare. But you can try.

WOMEN

Let us bring the Chief.

[*They go out.*]

THE CHISERA

[*The* CHISERA *reappears cautiously.*] Have they gone?

PADAHOON

To bring Rain Wind to command you.

THE CHISERA

Can he command the sap to rise or bid the deer-weed spring when there is no rain? My power is gone from me.

PADAHOON

Chisera, this is a grave matter to refuse service in time of war — be advised by the word of a friend —

THE CHISERA

Has the Chisera indeed a friend?

PADAHOON

Have I not proved ——

THE CHISERA

Padahoon, when did you ever visit me for any but your own advantage? For what else did you stir me against Simwa, and why now do you seek my blessing but to make good against him the honour of which he has robbed you? Does any one of you bring me venison except for profit or grind my meal for love?

PADAHOON

Seeing how little good you had of the love of the Arrow Maker, why should you desire it?

THE CHISERA

You spit poison like a toad, Padahoon, but your fangs are drawn. The Arrow Maker never loved me.

PADAHOON

[*Approaching her with the manner of having gained a point.*] If you have the wit to know so much ——

THE CHISERA

[*Commanding him from her with a gesture as she seats herself.*] Padahoon, there is no more power in me than there is tang in a wet bow-string. [*She rocks her head between her hands.*] It is gone from me as the shadow goes up from the mountain. As the wild geese go northward at the end of the rains, so is my power —— How shall I win it again who cannot win the love of man. . . . Ah, leave me, Padahoon, leave me! [*She covers her head with her blanket.*]

[*Enter* CHIEF RAIN WIND, *stumbling blindly, led by his wife and followed at a respectful distance by the*

other women. He walks with dignity, in spite of his blindness, and has on all the insignia of rank except the war-bonnet. SEEGOOCHE *has a hasty, eager manner, ingratiating but timid.*]

PADAHOON

[*To them.*] You will get nothing.

CHIEF

I do not come asking; I command.

SEEGOOCHE

No, no, do not be harsh with her! Let me speak, we women will understand each other.

CHIEF

[*Putting his wife aside.*] Chisera. [*The* CHISERA *starts at the tone of authority, but controls herself.*] Friend of the gods. [*She makes a movement of protest.*] I have that to say to you which should be said but once, which to say at all is shame to you. Great powers have been given you to turn the favour of the gods as a willow is turned in the wind. How is it you have not turned them when your people are in war and bad fortune? We are driven as hunted rabbits to hide in holes in the rocks, and our fighting men are outnumbered; even now we do not know if there be one left alive of them —— Our tribe shall be as a forgotten tale unless you intercede for us.

THE CHISERA

[*Over her shoulder.*] What? Is it possible Simwa cannot bring this affair to pass without the gods?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Breaking in eagerly.*] Yes, yes, the gods are very great, there is nothing without them.

THE CHISERA

[*Still to the* CHIEF.] Does Simwa ask it?

CHIEF

The Chief commands it.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Cringingly.*] No. No. Chisera, mind him not! He is not himself, the hunger and the loss of battle do distress him. We beg of you, we implore you, Chisera — we will bring gifts to you — gifts, Chisera. [*She looks about despairingly for a suitable gift, snatches a great rope of beads from the* CHIEF'S *neck and drops it in the* CHISERA'S *lap.*] Spoil of our enemies when the war is over, and this to keep as a reminder —— So — if only you will persuade the gods to friend us.

THE CHISERA

[*Lifting the collar and letting it fall.*] And if I will not?

[*Still with her eyes on the* CHIEF, *ignoring* SEEGOOCHE.]

CHIEF

Chisera, I am an old man, and I knew your father. We had much good talk together — I am very old —

but I am not blind in my judgment as I am in my eyes. In war time there is but one law for those faithless to the tribal obligation. You know it.

THE CHISERA

[*Drawing her blanket.*] I know it.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Dropping to the ground and beating the earth with her palms.*] Do not, do not refuse it, Wise One, Friend of the Friend! What has Simwa done that you should destroy us?

THE CHISERA

You ask me that, Seegooche?

SEEGOOCHE

I know — you said —— Such a small thing, Chisera. To love you a little before he loved my daughter. Young men do often so — and you were very fair and no doubt beguiled him —— Ah, who could withstand you, daughter of the gods? [*Wheedling.*] But your punishment is heavy upon him.

THE CHISERA

Is it so?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Thinking she has gained a point.*] It is indeed as you said; he makes no more arrows, and his luck in the hunt is gone from him. And the men mock him. A war leader should not be mocked, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

No more should a Friend of the gods, but Simwa mocked me.

SEEGOOCHE

[*Losing hope.*] He was mad, Chisera, he had eaten rattleweed. But my daughter did not mock you. Think of my daughter!

THE CHISERA

When does your daughter ever think of me?

SEEGOOCHE

[*Broken and drooping.*] Every day she thinks of you. When she is ahungered, when her man brings her nothing from the hunt — as — you have said, Chisera. When she digs roots with the old women and no one prevents her for the sake of a child to be born.

THE CHISERA

[*With relish.*] Does she dig roots?

SEEGOOCHE

With the barren women. Also her beauty goes, she is so thin with the famine.

THE CHISERA

[*Bearing her arm.*] I also am thin.

[*From this moment some perception of the pervasive misery of the situation enters her mind and begins to colour her speech.*]

CHIEF

Hunger and sickness and war have come into the camp because you kept not your heart, Chisera.

Yet a greater than these shall come upon you if you forget your tribal obligation.

THE CHISERA

[*Rising on one knee.*] What obligation have I owed, Chief Rain Wind, and not remembered it?

CHIEF

That which lies upon all that have power with the Friend of the Soul of Man. Only the gods can save us, and only you know the true and acceptable road to them.

THE CHISERA

[*Rising and moving toward her hut.*] I am overweary for the road; let Simwa find it.

[*An arrow, with a feather and fragment of bark attached to it, is shot into the camp from the direction of the fighting.* PADAHOON *takes it up and carries it to the* CHIEF, *the others crowding about.*]

CHIEF

What was that?

PADAHOON

A message from the fighting men.

CHIEF

Read me the token.

PADAHOON

A vulture's feather and bark of *whenonabe*. Defeat and flight.

WOMEN

Ai! Ai!

[*They throw up their arms in despair.*]

CHIEF

They will not be far behind their arrows.

[*All listen. A faint whoop is heard.* PADAHOON *answers with his mouth covered with his hand. The rest of the women and children come out of the rocks. Fighting men come clambering up the steep. They show torn clothing and streaks of blood. The women bring them the water bottles as they drop upon the ground.* WACOBA'S *husband,* PAMAQUASH, *with an arrow in his side, leaps once in air and drops dead. His wife sinks on the ground beside him, rocking and moaning. One breaks his unstrung bow across his knees and stamps the pieces in the earth. Finally comes* SIMWA, *his war-bonnet bedraggled.*]

SIMWA

Ugh! Is it so I find the fighting men of Sagharawite — huddled together like rabbits when the coyotes are after them?

WACOBA

[*Scattering dust on her head.*] Ai, Ai, my man, my man!

SIMWA

Be still, you fool! Would you call up our enemies with your noise? [*The wailing drops to a moan.*] Put out that fire — they can sniff smoke as far as a vulture smells carrion. [CHOCO *stamps out the fire.*]

You, Choco, do you show your face to me, misbegotten whelp of a coyote! It was you who led the fleeing.

CHOCO

[*Sullenly.*] It was Tavwots.

TAVWOTS

By the Bear, you shall have a wound for that though you ran too fast to have one in battle.

[*He draws the obsidian knife at his belt.*]

PADAHOON

Fools! [*He strikes up* TAVWOTS' *arm; another Indian jerks* CHOCO *by the ankles causing him to sit down.*] Have you killed so many in battle, Tavwots, that you can afford to lose us a fighting man?

[*The men subside exhausted.*]

CHIEF

Peace! Though I am too old for battle, yet I am master in the camp. What has happened?

SIMWA

We have shown the Tecuyas what running is like.

TAVWOTS

The gods send we have run fast enough to throw them off the trail, else they will attack before morning.

[*Consternation among the women.*]

CHIEF

[*To them.*] Kima! [*Their grief falls off to a whimper. To* SIMWA.] Where met you?

SIMWA

Under Waban where they stayed to cook venison they had killed. We had every way the advantage ——

TAVWOTS

As much as rabbits when they have met with coyotes. They were three to one of us.

SIMWA

[*Ignoring him with an effort.*] We were between them and cover — we were driving them toward Waban — but they sent one out against us armed — Chief and father, how do you think he was armed who put the sons of the Bear to flight? With a stick — a painted stick with feathers on it. [*Angry and protesting murmurs.*] An old man with a stick, Rain Wind, and they ran before him like squaws who deserve a beating! Faugh!

[*Native movement of disgust.*]

TAVWOTS

[*Rising on his elbow.*] You shall be sicker, Simwa, when you have eaten your words. That old man was Tibu, the medicine man of the Tecuyas. I knew him.

SIMWA

Then it was you, Tavwots, who broke and ran?

TAVWOTS

He came upon us with charms and spells. He had the gods on his side.

CHOCO

Our hearts were turned to water because of his evil medicine.

CHIEF

Are not the gods of Sagharawite stronger than the gods of the Tecuyas?

TAVWOTS

Not when we have one to lead us who despises their blessings.

SIMWA

Well, I believe in the medicine of Tibu. He has made old women of you.

CHIEF

Think no more of that. Let us consider what is to be done.

[*Shadows of vultures appear on the rocks, attracted by the dead.* WACOBA *springs up from casting dust upon her head to flap them away with her blanket, which she spreads over the body of her husband.*]

PADAHOON

[*As he motions to the men to move the body near the shelter.*] Yes, it is time to take counsel when even the birds of the air betray us to our enemies.

[*The women gather together about the dead. One of them takes the place of the sentry who comes to Council.*

The men collect near the CHISERA'S *hut with the exception of* SIMWA, *who remains seated, restringing his bow.* BRIGHT WATER *goes to him.*]

BRIGHT WATER

Simwa, how long will you let your pride destroy us?

SIMWA

Is that a word for a man's wife?

BRIGHT WATER

It is a true one. Do we not know, you and I, that it is but pride that makes you stand out against the Friend of the gods. Look at me, Simwa, is it not proved on my body that she spoke truly when she said that you throve only by her blessing?

SIMWA

Can you bear to admit so much?

BRIGHT WATER

Bear? What have I not borne? Have I complained when I dug roots? Have I quivered when I was mocked? Has there been any sign of shame on my face for all the scorn on theirs? Have I said, "Give me children," when the nursing mothers pitied me? Oh, I have borne, I have borne, but this I cannot bear.

SIMWA

What is now so hard?

BRIGHT WATER

To know that you and I know the truth and that you will see the tribe wiped out before you will admit it.

SIMWA

The truth?

BRIGHT WATER

That you were the Chisera's lover for the sake of what she could do for you, and your denial left me no way for her to prove it except by taking away the help of the gods from us all. Is not that the truth?

SIMWA

Would you have me ashamed before all men?

BRIGHT WATER

When have I not been ashamed since I married you?

SIMWA

Let her alone! They will kill her if she refuses to make medicine and then we shall be rid of her.

BRIGHT WATER

And you would permit that? [*He shifts uneasily under her gaze.*] Simwa —— [*With profound entreaty.*] Simwa!

SIMWA

What is the witch to me?

BRIGHT WATER

My sister, I think, for she has loved you even as I have, to my sorrow.

[*She turns away from him meditating some deep purpose, and from this time on the progress of that purpose in her mind is evident in her bearing toward her husband.*]

CHIEF

[*Coming forward.*] Let the Council sit. [*They sit as in Act I.*] Simwa, as war leader, what plan have you?

SIMWA

It wants not plans so much as men to do them.

CHIEF

Whatever is in any man's mind for the good of the tribe, let it be delivered. Observe not the rule of the elders but speak at once. [*A moment, during which black looks are cast at* SIMWA.] Will no one speak?

PADAHOON

Chief and Tribesmen, once I gave counsel and you despised it ——

CHIEF

No more of that. Give counsel now.

PADAHOON

It is the same counsel, but time has not mended the occasion. Penned here on the edge of the precipice we can but starve. We must break through our enemies and strike at their women and their stores.

TAVWOTS

Every trail is watched. Not so much as a weasel can go in and out from Toorape and they not know it.

PADAHOON

With so many watchers then, they can not have much of a fighting force at any point. In an hour it will be dark; we shall go down by Deer Leap with the women and children, and stay not for fighting, but fleeing for our lives, break through to their villages ——

CHOCO

But if they move on us tonight? If the vultures have already betrayed us — even now they may be within earshot?

TAVWOTS

If they come up with us before we reach Deer Leap it is to run into the wolf's mouth.

PADAHOON

I have thought of that. Tonight they expect us to mourn our dead and go before our gods ——

CHIEF

So should we.

PADAHOON

That they may think so, leave one behind to sound the medicine drum throughout the night. So they shall fear to attack and expect an easier victory in the morning when we are exhausted with dancing to the gods.

TAVWOTS

But he that stays, what shall become of him ——

CHIEF

He shall die as becomes him —— [*Rising*] as becomes a chief of his people.

[*Murmurs of consternation and then silence.*]

PADAHOON

But another — whose counsels we prize less ——

CHIEF

It is the tribal use. None else too blind for the trail and too feeble for the sortie — [*With grim humour.*] but I can drum.

[*Solemn grunts of approval.*]

PADAHOON

If we win through Deer Leap, we can make terms for you. Tribesmen, what say you? [*A pause.*]

TAVWOTS

What I say is for myself only; but I go not out against the Tecuyas again unless the Chisera has blessed the going.

THE COUNCIL

Good counsel; good counsel! He has it!

SIMWA

There go two or three things to the making of fighting men, Tavwots, beside the blessing of women.

TAVWOTS

Two or three things, Simwa, that I think you

have not; honour to win advantage and wit to keep what you have got.

PADAHOON

As for me, I am with Tavwots; but —— [*He looks at* SIMWA.] The gods have no favours for unbelievers.

TAVWOTS

Nor have we, by the Bear!

INDIANS

[*Springing up.*] Nor have we! No, by the Bear! Out with him! [*They hustle* SIMWA. *One snatches off the war-bonnet, another the collar of bears' claws. Even the women strike dust upon him with their feet in an excess of contempt.*]

CHIEF

Peace, tribesmen!

TAVWOTS

Perhaps we shall have peace when we have a leader against whom neither the gods nor women have a spite. Tribesmen, who shall lead the going out but he who planned it?

INDIANS

Hi! Hi! PADAHOON! PADAHOON! [*They fling the collar about his neck.* TAVWOTS *hands him the bonnet.*] Hi! Hi! The Sparrow Hawk.

PADAHOON

Do not count on me too much with the Chisera;

all this time I have kept in camp with my wound I have reasoned with her but still she refuses me.

CHIEF

There shall be an end to that ——

PADAHOON

How then ——?

CHIEF

Who denies service to the tribe in extremity must be dealt with as an enemy. [*Consternation.*]

CHOCO

But a Friend of the gods ——

TAVWOTS

Let the gods save her ——

CHIEF

There are times when the gods must be content to stand still and see what men will do. Who serves not us, serves our enemies. It is the law.

PADAHOON

[*Reluctantly.*] It is the law ——

CHIEF

Death or good medicine — Speak, tribesmen!

[*Above the silence of the Council is heard the deep excited breathing of the women.*]

THE COUNCIL

[*One after another.*] Death. Death. Death or good medicine. It is the law.

CHIEF

[*To* PADAHOON.] Bid her come.

PADAHOON

[*At the hut.*] Chisera, come to Council!

THE CHISERA

[*Issuing, wrapped in her blanket.*] Who sends for me?

CHIEF

Death is hot upon our trail. Stay him with your spells.

MEN AND WOMEN

Good medicine, Chisera, good medicine!

THE CHISERA

Have you not a war leader ——

[*She stops, noticing the bonnet on* PADAHOON — *looks from him to* SIMWA.]

PADAHOON

Who invites your blessing, Chisera!

CHIEF

Make spells for thy people!

THE CHISERA

What have my people done for me that I should weary myself to make medicine for them?

CHIEF

Are you not respected above all women of the campody? Even in war time ——

THE CHISERA

Ah — respect! What have I to do with respect? Am I not as other women that men should desire me? Are my breasts less fair that there should never be milk in them?

CHIEF

We honour you after the use of Medicine Men. What more would you have?

THE CHISERA

The dole of women. Love and sorrow and housekeeping, a husband to give me children, even though he beat me.

CHIEF

Love you have given, and sorrow you have got. Shame and defeat are your children. So it is always when power falls upon women. The word has passed in Council, Chisera; will you repair this damage, or will you die for it?

THE CHISERA

[*As her eye travels the circle of the camp.*] I do not find the taste of life so sweet that I should turn it twice upon my tongue; but —— [*Her gaze halts on* SIMWA, *and all the attention of the camp seems to hang a moment in suspense as* SIMWA *ignores her.*] Do I die then?

PADAHOON

Let Simwa die!

INDIANS

Ah — ah ——!

SIMWA

What, old fox, are you out of cover at last?

PADAHOON

By whom trouble came into the camp, let it depart. Who prevented the wisdom of the gods at the throwing of the sacred sticks? By whose counsel were our allies of Castac destroyed? Who hardened the Chisera's heart so that she kept not our foes from us?

INDIANS

Simwa! Simwa!

PADAHOON

Sons of the Bear, do you think to win favour of the gods when you have one who mocks them in your midst? Would you see the backs of the Tecuyas? Would you win to your homes again? Let Simwa die!

INDIANS

Aye, aye. Let Simwa die! A judgment! A judgment!

SIMWA

[*Aside to his wife.*] My quiver, hand me my quiver!

CHIEF

Simwa, as thou art a son to me, I fear the charge

is just. But do you entreat the Chisera to go before the gods for us, then will this evil pass.

SIMWA

[*Rising.*] And if I choose to have it said that when the tribesmen of Sagharawite took a woman to Council, only Simwa stood out against it?

CHIEF

Then must I give judgment.

BRIGHT WATER

Simwa!

SIMWA

[*Folding his arms.*] It shall not be said of me that I have borne to take my life of a woman.

THE CHISERA

Whether you can bear it or not, it shall be said of you, for though I am unhappy, I am still the Chisera, and I declare unto you that neither the life nor death of a broken man can avail to turn the gods. But you, Chief Rain Wind, and you, Tribesmen of Sagharawite, you — if you must visit the loss of my power, let it be on your own heads, for you only are blameworthy.

CHIEF

This is no time for riddles, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

I mean none. What did Simwa other to me than the occasion allowed him? Was it his fault that he found me alone and love-hungry? Was it he who

ordered that I should live apart where no woman could see how my heart went and give me counsel? Was it any fault but yours — you that kept me far from your huts lest I should see and carry word to the gods how unworthy you were! You that feared to find yourselves lessened when I walked among you with my power — Ai. Ai! did you think at all what became of the woman so long as you had my medicine to help you?

TIAWA

[*Creeping forward.*] So I said, so I said from the beginning. She has been taught to be a Chisera, but she was born a woman!

[*Excitement among the women.*]

CHIEF

Your words are sharp, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

The fact is sharper. It has eaten through my bosom.

CHIEF

We meant the best — we judged you companioned by the gods.

THE CHISERA

Did ever a woman serve them the less because she had dealt with a man? Nay, all the power of woman comes from loving and being loved, and now the bitterest of all my loss is to know that I have never had it.

[*She draws up her blanket.*]

BRIGHT WATER

And not you only ——

THE CHISERA

You ——?

[*She turns away confounded.*]

SIMWA

Wife — wife — if she finds the gods again, they will surely kill me.

BRIGHT WATER

Let them. Though I am your wife I am the Chief's daughter, and the tribe is still something to me. I will save them if I can. Chisera ——

[*The* CHISERA *listens and turns slowly.*]

CHIEF

Is that my daughter?

TAVWOTS

Hush! Perhaps she will move her!

BRIGHT WATER

Do you think yourself aggrieved so much, Chisera? Come, I will match sorrows with you, I and all these, [*The women surge forward.*] and the stakes shall be the people. Here is my pride that I throw down, in my bride year to know my husband an impostor. Have you any sorrow to match with that?

WACOBA

Since you wish a man so much, Chisera, here is mine whom the vultures seek.

[*The women part in two lines to show the dead man stark in his blanket.*]

A Woman

Would you have a child at your breast, Chisera, here is mine, for my milk is dried with the hunger.

[*She holds up her swaddled child which* Bright Water *takes and holds toward the* Chisera *who stands confused, for the first time acutely aware of their misery.*]

Bright Water

[*Measuring the effect of her words.*] Chisera, my breast is as fruitless as yours — but you — you have — good medicine.

Tiawa

Lay hold on the gods, Chisera, these are ills from which man cannot save us!

[*The* Chisera *throws out her hands to signify the loss of her power, her blanket slips to the ground and she covers her face with her hands.*]

The Chisera

Gone — gone! It is gone from me!

Bright Water

[*Signing to the women to hide the blanket.*] By dancing you shall bring it back again — for the sake of the women and the children — dance, Chisera!

[*Her voice has a kindling sound, and the women echo it with a breath.*]

The Chisera

Oh, I have danced until the earth under me is

beaten to dust, and my heart is as dry as the dust, and all my songs have fallen to the ground. [*She begins to walk up and down excitedly.*] With what cry shall I call on the gods, now my songs are departed? [*She begins to chant.*]

And my heart is emptied of all
But the grief of women.

[*The women watch her breathlessly; as she gradually swings into the dance, they seem to urge her with the stress of their anxiety.*]

All the anguish of women,
It smells to the gods
As the dead after battle,
It sounds in my heart
As the hollow drums calling to battle,
And the gods come quickly.

[*Shadows of vultures appear on the rocks.*]

Now I shall make a new song,
A song of the grief of women;
But for myself,
But for all who have eaten sorrow,
Who are sick and ashamed
And for love go ahungered ——

[*As the inspiration grows, the tribe takes up the movement of the dance, crooning softly, falling off into breathless silence when she speaks.*]

Come, O my power,
Indwelling spirit!
It is I that call.
Childless, unmated ——

[*Drums and rattles are brought out, at first cautiously lest she take alarm and be turned from her purpose, but as the fervour of her dancing increases, with increased confidence.* SIMWA *remains seated at one side, watching her, his foot touching his quiver.* PADAHOON, *who has moved over near him, observes him narrowly in the intervals of dancing.* CHISERA *sings.*]

Nay, I shall mate with the gods,
And the tribesmen shall be my children.
Rise up in me, O, my power,
On the wings of eagles!
Return upon me as the rain
The earth renewing,
Make my heart fruitful
To nourish my children.

[SIMWA *is seen to strip the magic arrow from his quiver.*]

BRIGHT WATER

Simwa, Simwa, what do you do?

SIMWA

No more than the gods will do to me if they hear her.

THE CHISERA

This is my song that I make,
I, the Chisera,
The song of the mateless woman;
None holdeth my hand but the Friend,
In the silence, in the secret places
We shall beget great deeds between us!

[*As she rises on the last movement of the dance toward ecstasy, the excitement rises with her, expressing itself in short irrepressible yelps, at the highest point of which a scream from* BRIGHT WATER *arrests the dancers. Suddenly the drums and rattles stop.* SIMWA *is seen to fit the arrow to the bow-string, but as he rises to loose it,* PADAHOON *breaks down his aim, and, lifting his body clear, with a stab of his flint knife, drops it inertly almost at the feet of the* CHISERA.]

PADAHOON

[*To the rush of protest.*] Stand back; am I not war leader to deal with traitors as seems right to me? [*Stooping, he plucks the arrow from* SIMWA'S *hand.*] He would have shot our Chisera —— [*As he examines it.*] the man was dishonest even in his unbelief — this is a medicine arrow!

THE CHISERA

[*Without abating her triumphant mood she takes it from* PADAHOON'S *reluctant hand; dawning apprehension on the faces of the others.*] In a good hour, it has come back to me. Tavwots, your bow. [*She takes the bow and strings it, singing:*]

Oh, singing reed,
That sings of death to the foeman,
Swift be thy path as a snake
To the heart of a foeman.

PADAHOON

[*Uneasily.*] But here are no foes of yours, Chisera.

THE CHISERA

[*Fitting the arrow.*] And what of Tecuya?

INDIANS

Ah — ah!

[*Intaking breath of relief.*]

THE CHISERA

[*Approaching the edge of the precipice toward Tecuya, the tribe singing after her with short yelps of excitement.*]

Let us arise and go now
After the arrow —
To the valley of Sagharawite
Where the land knows us
And the hills are friendly.
Fly swift, O stinging reed,
Make a path through to the foeman!

[*She looses the arrow.*]

To our foes, O magic reed,
To our foes — at Tecuya!

[*Suddenly through the silence of suspended breath, breaks the sharp roll of the drums, recalling the tribe to action. They gird themselves in haste and gather their belongings, as, shaking her bow aloft like a medicine stick, the* CHISERA *moves with the assurance of victory before them down the mountain.*]

CURTAIN

MARGARET CARNEGIE LIBRARY
MILLS COLLEGE

THIS BOOK DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW

Books not returned on time are subject to a fine of 10c per volume per day.

21 Ap

FEB 27

NOV 2

MAY 1

RESERVED

RESERVED

D 3 '35

F 28 '36

FACULTY

DEC 5 '79

13439

MILLS COLLEGE LIBRARY

BNF 812 A937a The arrow-maker; a drama in three
Austin, Mary (Hunter

3 3086 00094 7531

812 (13439) A937a

Mills College Library
Withdrawn